■ ENTERTAINMENT / A2-1
Fil-Am Oscar nominee picks RP designers' creation

■ BUSINESS / B2-1
Economic hits and misses of the past 20 years

■ LIFESTYLE / C1
Edades, father of Philippine modern art, remembered

HERE'S A FIRST:
Now you can view "Edsa 20: Isang Lakbasan," the two-part documentary, again...or even download your own copy, free of charge. Just log on to www.inq7.net. No subscription and no registration required.

2 Fil-Ams win top int'l award for indie film

By Ruben V. Nepales
Los Angeles Correspondent

SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA—TWO FILIPINO-Americans have won the 97Octaves Semisena to Watch Award in the 2006 Independent Spirit Awards for their film "Gavilla."

Ian Gamazon and Neill Dela Llana, who were both born in the Philippines and grow up in the United States, received a $25,000 grant with the

CON-APPS, A11

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, March 6, 2006 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 88 P18 online service@inq7.net

Beltran followers sneak past Camp Crame guards

By Luige A. del Puerto and Michael Lim Ubac

SOME 30 SUPPORTERS of Kalipunang Pwp. Crispin Beltran, who is being held in Camp Crame on charges of rebellion, managed to sneak past heavily armed guards at the gates

BELTRAN, A12

Rebels seek answers to generals' poll links

Say talks with GMA must deal with fraud

By Fe Zamora

ANY TALKS BETWEEN President Macapagal-Arroyo and restive soldiers on defusing the political crisis must include the issue of the involvement of generals in probable fraud in the May 2004 election.

A source close to a military group that had threatened to withdraw its support from Ms Arroyo yesterday told the Inquirer that this was the position the group had taken in response to Malacañang's statement that the President was "ready to hold a dialogue" with different sectors of the Armed Forces.

"The involvement of the military in election cheating should be on the agenda. Not just a few were actually involved (in the cheating), practically the whole institution was," the source said, relaying the position of the group.

The statement would suggest that as far as the group was concerned, the "Hello Garci" election controversy remained a live issue that Ms Arroyo must fully resolve if she hoped to find political peace.

The names of at least four top military officials were mentioned in the alleged wiretapped conversations between Ms Arroyo and former Election Commissioner Virgilio Garcillano supposedly involving rigging the results of the 2004 presidential election.

The names of Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., then chief of the Special Operations Command; Southern chief Maj. Gen. Gabriel Habacon, then chief of the 1st Infantry Division, and then Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko (ret.) were mentioned in the tapes.

Esperon has been mentioned in military circles as a possible

REBELS, A10

WINNING BEAUTIES. The winners of the Binibining Pilipinas beauty pageant—(from left) Ocsilia Lou Valenzuela, Bb. Pilipinas-International; Lia Andrea Ramos, Bb. Pilipinas-Universe, and Ana Maris Iggui, Bb. Pilipinas-World—rejoice after Saturday night's coronation at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City. (Story in Metro, Page 424.)

TV docus prop up Palace prop war

By Christine O. Avendaño and Luige A. del Puerto

OVER THE WEEKEND, FOLLOWing the lifting of the state of national emergency, the government went on yet another offensive, this time to win the hearts and minds of the people.

After showing on Friday a short documentary on the alleged conspiracy to bring down the administration, government TV stations ran two other documentaries about military coup plotters and communist "terrorists."

RPN-9 ran on Saturday "Act of Deception," which looked into the communist movement in the country, and "Sa Kuko ng Grup Jiliar," which was about the people behind the Oakwood mutiny in July 2003.

The two documentaries were made last year by the National Alliance for Democracy (NAD), according to Government Media Secretary Cerge Remonde.

"Because of what happened recently, these documentaries are relevant in the present situation," Remonde said.

He said the government was in the midst of a propaganda war, with its detractors relentlessly discrediting it.

"We sure can take away the right of the government to ensure it won't be drowned out in this propaganda war," he said.

Malacañang released on Friday a 12.5-minute documentary titled "Pagbasa sa Katitikan: 1017" that it produced to explain why President Macapagal-Arroyo had to declare a state of emergency after foiling a coup attempt on

TV DOCUS, A12

After lifting of 1017, war of attrition begins

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

WHEN PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo lifted Proclamation No. 1017 putting the country in a state of national emergency, she claimed her declaration had left the nation "stronger for dealing quickly and decisively with this issue" of armed challenge to supplant her administration.

This claim overstates the results of the presidential decree in effect for a week, a week packed with events that changed the political balance of power, promising another round of political instability since the shock effect of the emergency declaration wears off.

There's no question Ms Arroyo acted decisively to abort a plot involving the withdrawal by strategic military contingents of support for her administration.

The plot called for the defecting units to join the rally of political opponents of the regime on Feb. 24 at Edsa, celebrating the 20th anniversary of the first People Power Revolution in 1986.

The units were to proclaim their withdrawal of support, serving as the signal to spark wider military defections and street insurrections in which civilians were expected by the plotters to join in a reprise of People Power I.

In revoking 1017, the President said "the most important achievement of 1017 is the preemptive action, to prevent an

AFTER, A12

RP, Thailand crises set back democracy in Southeast Asia

BANGKOK—WITH ONCE A SINgle rising star on the horizon, democracy in Southeast Asia is taking a beating as many democratizations seek to dislodge an electoral but authoritarian leader in Thailand and the Philippines reels after a wrenching state of emergency over an alleged coup plot.

Across the region, the health of democracy ranges from fragile to abysmal, with one since suddenly energetic, Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim nation and still recovering from three decades of dictatorship, is making significant progress toward rule of law, media freedom and transparency.

"The problem in some cases is the abuse of weak democracies, the exploitation by leaders of those parts of the system which aren't really democratic or strong," says Robert Broadfoot of the Hong Kong-based Political and Economic Risk Consultancy.

Although the tide against him appears to be rising, Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra of Thailand has managed to survive mass street protests calling for his ouster on grounds of corruption, abuse of power and ignoring democratic institutions. (See related story in The World, Page A8)

So far, the protests have been peaceful, compared with the military interventions and bloodshed that used to bedevil Thai politics. But its democracy is moving into unchartered political waters because opposition parties are vowing to boycott parliamentary elections that Thaksin has called for April 2.

In the Philippines, fear is mounting that a campaign to destabilize President Macapagal-Arroyo is fraying the fabric of

RP, THAILAND, A6

SUBIC RAPE CASE

Don't judge me too harshly, says victim

By Fermin Azarcon-dela Cruz

THE VISIT TO THE SUBIC BAY Freeport on Halloween night was supposed to be a family outing—until it turned into a nightmare.

Two older brothers had dropped off 22-year-old Nicole—not her real name—at a bar. She was accompanied by a sister, aged 12, and an American serviceman, a longtime family friend.

She felt totally at home in the bar with other US servicemen on furlough from a joint RP-US counterterrorism exercise in the Philippines.

She grew up in a naval facility in Zamboanga, where her family runs a canteen frequented by US servicemen.

After finishing her Management Accounting course at the Ateneo de Davao and starting a

DON'T JUDGE, A13

UNDER ONE ROOF
The P10-million Cebu Daily News Building puts together the Inquirer's Visayas Bureau, CDN and Bandera in one integrated newsroom, as well as PEP Printing Corp. and Lexmedia Digital. Former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. speaks during the building's inauguration on Wednesday.

A2
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2006
Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: It's a) partly cloudy, a) partial thunderstorm was activated at 7:30am east of Southern Mindanao, with maximum sustained winds of 55 kph near the center. Forecast to move west at 15 kph. Visayas and Luzon affecting eastern Luzon and southern Visayas.
PAGASA-Mabini

'Corruption at root of RP problems'

Church leader says Pinoys should come up with new breed of leaders

By Christine V. Esguerra

THE CRISIS OF LEADERSHIP IS JUST THE "TIP of the iceberg," according to the president of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP).

The problem, said Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo in a lecture posted in his blogsite, "is a concentration of corruption that goes down to the barangay level, up and down and up, infecting the whole body politic like a contagious cancer."

"It deprives the poor of permanent shelter, health benefits, lifesaving education, dignified employment and, above all, sufficient food," he said.

To cure what he called a "social cancer," Filipinos should confront their ethics and come up with a "new breed of leaders in our country."

Legislators was trying to rally the country behind a "new social order" in an apparent response to the seeming void created by the arrival and departure of politicians, all of whom appeared to be enslaved by traditional politics.

The vision was contained in a "national roadmap" forged on "turning the tends of hope through moral values."

The strategy was consistent with the January CBCP pastoral letter that pointed to a crisis of moral values as the center of the problem in Philippine society today.

Lagdameo said such a crisis

LAGDAMEO

seriously affected the poor who were "ultimate victims exploited and treated like commodities."

"Graft and corruption have been flagrant and endemic, breeding poverty. Widespread poverty in turn breeds graft and corruption," he said.

Lagdameo said the roadmap

also all "drivers of change"—meaning family, school, business enterprises, governance units and all other sectors of society—what they could do for the common good of the national community.

"In trying to answer this question, I [the roadmap] strongly suggests that whatever answer we give must be fully consistent with the vision and mission we should have for our country and the core values that should underlie all aspects of our national life," he said.

A crucial first step would be to **gather a "critical mass** of like-minded and good-willed nationalists with a passion and clamor for good governance and prophetic leadership" from which a "new breed of transformers" would be born, Lagdameo said.

"This critical mass will be the training ground of other nationalists who will lead our country with the values of honesty and justice, truth and integrity, truthfulness and accountability, transparency and stewardship," he said.

According to Lagdameo, the country's political loss would be strong if they were anchored on "morals, ethics, social responsibility and good governance."

"Such strong institutions could then work together to enhance the personal dignity of every individual as well as to promote the common good of our country," he said. "This happens, however, only if the agents of change and the transformers of values in our society are empowered and invested with a deep sense of responsible citizenship."

Militant studes disown former leader Defensor

A MILITANT STUDENT GROUP formerly headed by Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor has disowned him for defending Presidential Proclamation No. 1017 and for advising media to restrain itself in its coverage.

In a statement, the National Union of Students of the Philippines (NUSP), founded as "irreconcilable, if not downright despicable" statements made by Defensor that media must practice self-restraint in the coverage of political events and developments.

Defensor was NUSP president in 1969-89.

"That someone who was once the national president of our organization could utter such statements threatens and subdues us. We wonder how he could still bear to look at himself in the mirror," the NUSP statement said.

It said that Defensor had failed to live up to NUSP tradition, "We unequivocally disown him and also ask our institute to erase him from our history books."

The NUSP also accused Defensor of turning his back on the principles of freedom of expression and, worse, "even being party to silencing the students and the people."

"Our message to Defensor: Shut up if you know no better than to defend Arroyo's repressive Proclamation 1017 and to continue being a lackey of this already desperate regime," the NUSP said.

The NUSP is a national alliance of student councils and governments with 600 member universities. It was established in 1967 and has since been at the vanguard of students' struggle for their rights and welfare in solidarity with the people's struggle for greater freedom and democracy.

During the Marcos regime, the NUSP was banned along with other anti-Marcos organizations.

Alvin Arpa

Gonzalez justifies continuing media watch

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ yesterday cited the Revised Penal Code in justifying the continued surveillance of seven personnel media personalities even after Presidential Proclamation No. 1017 had been lifted.

He said if media practitioners were found transgressing the relations, then they would be held liable.

"Under the Revised Penal Code, even if there is no Proclamation 1017, there is a law on inciting to sedition, there is a law on rebellion, there is a law on sedition, there is a law on libel," Gonzalez said in a phone interview.

Gonzalez made the remarks when asked why the government was still monitoring the moves of media practitioners now that PP 1017 had been lifted.

He said if media practitioners were found transgressing the relations, then they would be held liable.

The Revised Penal Code lists criminal acts and their corresponding penalties.

Gonzalez refused to identify the seven print and broadcast media personalities being watched. "I don't want to name them yet," he said.

After President Macapagal-Arroyo imposed emergency rule through PP 1017 on Feb. 24, police raided the offices of The Daily Tribune, a broadsheet which had been critical of her administration.

The military also deployed troops to secure television stations ABS-CBN and GMA-7.

Philippine National Police Director General Arturo Lomibao later warned media to follow government standards in reporting the news.

After the state of emergency was lifted, sedition charges were filed against Tribune publisher and editor in chief Nilda Cadiz-Sheerwin and two of the paper's columnists.

Gonzalez also said the footage of ABS-CBN's coverage of the Feb. 26 standoff at Marine headquarters in Fort Bonifacio was being reviewed.

The defense standoff began after Senior Marine officers led by Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, head of Philippine Marine Corps, and Col. Ariel Querubin pressured the relief of Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda.

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LP board meet to decide fate of Atienza et al.

By TJ Burgonio

TOP OFFICIALS OF THE OPPOSITION LIBERAL Party are set to meet today to decide the fate of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and other party members who elected a new set of LP officers last Thursday, a move branded as "illegal" by party president Sen. Franklin Drilon.

The LP national board, composed of the party's top seven officers, will tackle the action "to be taken against the usurpers," former Education Undersecretary Jose Luis Gascon said yesterday.

"We have to deal with what they did last Thursday in a firm manner," Gascon, a member of the LP National Executive Committee (NEC), who questioned and then walked out of Thursday's proceedings, said in a phone interview.

While Sen. Manuel Roxas II had argued that members of Atienza's breakaway group should be deemed to have resigned, the party had yet to decide whether to expel them or keep their positions vacant, Gascon said.

"These are still the subject of discussions," he said, stressing the party had to establish **[illegible]** precedents" could pave to the election or were duped into participating.

The LP national board is composed of sources at their Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, vice chair; Senate President Drilon, president; Rep. Neptali Gonzales, vice president; Rep. Benigno Aquino III, secretary general; Rep. Rafael Nantes, treasurer; Roxas, vice president for advocacies, and Rep. Jesnie Cua, vice president for external affairs.

Gascon said he suspected the party secretariat had invited Atienza and his ally Cua to the meeting, but doubted they would show up. Without them, the five members of the board would still constitute a quorum, he said.

The scheduled meeting comes three days after Drilon, through legal counsel Alberto Agra, petitioned the Commission on Elections to nullify the election results and bar winners and his allies from underpreparing them-selves at the party's next officers.

In the election, Drilon was ousted as party president and replaced by Atienza. President Gen. Chief of Staff Michael Defensor and three other Cabinet members were elevated to other top positions. President Macapagal-Arroyo made an appearance after the election.

Atienza was presiding over a party conference on decentralization at the Manila Hotel last Thursday when he called for an election of new LP officers.

Drilon was quick to brand it as illegal, saying the mayor had no authority to convene the NEC and that only 51 out of 180 NEC members took part in the election.

Some irate LP officials charged that Malacañang's interference in the party's affairs was part of a grand design to destroy the party system through a "divide and rule tactic" and establish a one-party state.

"We are confident our position will be affirmed by the Comelec. All laws and jurisprudence are in our favor," Gascon said.

New US envoy sworn in, arriving soon

NEW US AMBASSADOR TO THE Philippines Ericde Gomery took her oath on Monday (Washington time) and will be arriving in Manila within the month, according to US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill who recently wound up a three-day visit here.

The first woman American ambassador to the country assumes the post that has been vacant for late US months after her predecessor, Francis Ricciardone was reassigned to the Middle East. During that period, Charge d'Affaires Paul Jones was the top US diplomat in Manila.

"In the next few weeks we will be welcoming a new ambassador here, Kristi is fantastic, we're looking forward to having Kristie here and I know she's looking forward to getting here," Hill told reporters at his pre-departure briefing last week.

Romey's nomination was confirmed by the US Senate on Feb. 17.

A career foreign service officer, she recently completed an assignment as US ambassador to Ecuador. She has served as consul in Geneva, deputy chief of mission in Jamaica, and held senior positions at the state Department and the National Security Council in Washington.

During her Jan. 31 confirmation hearing before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Romey said the US and the Philippines had strong economic and people-to-people ties and shared common goals of enhancing security and increasing prosperity. With Cecil Morella

Erap won't be ready to testify, says lawyer

By Melvin F. Flores

FORMER SEN. RENE SAGUISAG HAS TOLD the Sandiganbayan that former President Joseph Estrada would not be able to testify in his plunder trial on March 15 because of a lack of preparation.

In an urgent manifestation filed before the anti-graft court's Special Division on Thursday, Saguisag said: "We cannot in all probability be ready on March 15 for reasons beyond our control."

He said that Estrada's recent eye operation resulted in "the loss of a week of preparation."

Saguisag also said that some members of Estrada's legal defense team were "lawyering" for other clients, they needed more time to prepare for the case.

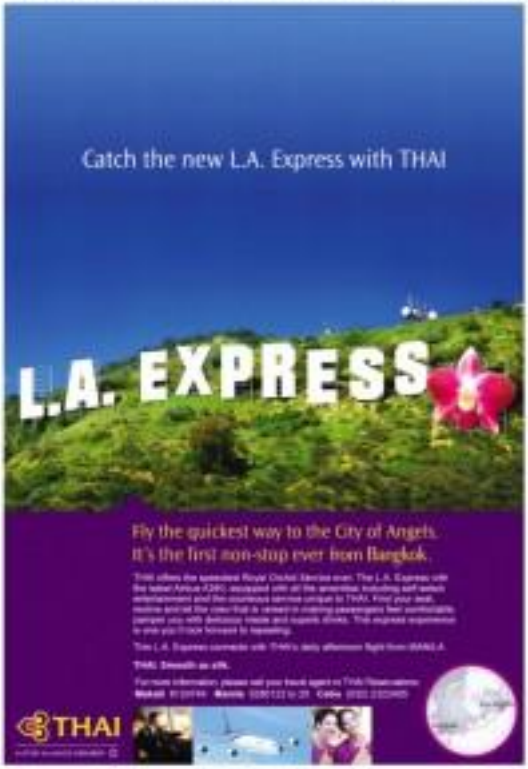
Estrada's lawyers have been complaining about the time they spent traveling to and from the former President's detention center in Tanay, Rizal. They have sought the court's permission to move Estrada to his residence in San Juan.

Estrada, meanwhile, said he was not a threat to national security but only to the administration of Mrs Arroyo because "I am still the legitimate president."

"Bakit sabi ng iilang nagpapa-threat sa akin could I be a threat to national security?" the 69-year-old Estrada said.

He said at least 80 percent of the people want Mrs Arroyo out, adding that his personal liberty was no longer important to him.

"Ang mahalaga ay ang kalayaan ng bansa at kalusugan, kaligtasan at ang kinabukasan ng susunod na mga henerasyon. Kaya nakahanda akong ilagay ang aking sarili sa peligro para sa pagpapanumbalik ng kalinawang ng pamahalaan' complaint at pagkabuhay ng Pilipinas. Importante is that the country is free from poverty and corruption, that people have the freedom to know the truth which is mandated by Executive Orders 464 at 2011," Estrada said.



'Comfort women' measure sought

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—At least 72 out of a total of 722 Japanese Imperialists have signed a petition for a bill obliging their government to issue formal apologies and compensation to victims of sexual violence by Japanese soldiers stationed in Asia, including the Philippines, during World War II.

KIMI Hinita, spokesperson of the Tokyo-based Seminars Peace Cycle Network, on Saturday told the Inquirer he shared the "good news" with 62 surviving victims of mass rape in Semarang, Indonesia in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.

The week-long "Peace Cycle 2006" ends in San Fernando in Manila on Thursday.

Hinata said Cambodian Minister Shohichi Kono of Okinawa initiated the petition that seeks to gather 100 more signatures.

Hinata, 58, known as a staunch anti-war and physical stress to reach were the victims of war.

Nestle Dizon, PDI Central Luzon desk

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NGO worker abducted in Aurora

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—A BONGOVISION news organization worker and radio station abducted by armed men in Baler, Aurora, on Friday night has remained missing, his colleagues said.

The executive host Esteben Jr., program officer of the Catholic Church-headed Bataras, has turned up negative, according to Josefina Ritchie, a fellow program officer of the victim.

According to police, witnesses reported seeing Esteben cry out for help as he was thrown into a heavily tinted minivan. Bonta was national license plates by four men at around 7 p.m. near Baler's district cooperative office.

The police and military have put up checkpoints along the Pantabangan-Cabiti highway in a bid to find Esteben.

Troops from the Army's 48th Infantry Battalion were suspected to have taken Esteben after the victim stopped four soldiers from recording a Bataras-sponsored forum and campaigning/forming on Chavez change on Feb. 28.

In a text message to the Inquirer that day, Esteben identified two of those who barged into the forum as 2Lt. Simeon Molina and a Sergeant Sanchez.

Lt. Col. Andres Kakilala, 48th IB commander, denied his men had a role in the abduction.

Esteben, as secretary general of the Multisectoral Action Group of Aurora, led the group's campaign against large-scale mining and illegal logging.

He was also the author of the radio program Big stories from over DJO in Baler.

Two messages from Esteben's cell phone were received half an hour after he was last reported saying, "Hinog-hinog mag-alala, oh dang ako. Dios's mercy. I'm all right," and "Magtatago ako (I'm in hiding)." The occupants of the messages, however, doubted they came from Esteben.

Recent incidents suggest the Bataras forum-article may have been making enemies. A Bataras building was burned down in December and two of its staff members were nearly abducted in the same month. In February, a military officer said on the radio that members of nongovernment organizations like Bataras were in the military's "order of battle."

Dennis Orgios, INK Central Luzon Desk/AFP

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He obtained a Masters degree in Business Management from the Asian Institute of Management (AIM), is a certified Teacher of Harvard University's Program on Negotiation, and is a member of the Society of Competitive Intelligence Professionals (SCIP) for which he served as Hong Kong Chapter coordinator. He finished his Bachelor of Science degree from the Philippine Military Academy and served as a Philippine Air Force officer and fighter pilot prior to his professional career in business.
Jam sees himself as a "first aid" of intelligence for more than a decade both as a practitioner and a consultant and has been working on projects in the region and in the U.S., helping companies with their business development and strategy needs, a lot. Among his clients are some of the top global firms. He is one of only two recognized CI trainers in Asia.
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Rebels seek answers to generals' poll links

Front page A1

successor to retired Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Generoso Senga, who will reach mandatory retirement age of 56 on July 21.

Another officer, Brig. Gen. Francisco Gudani (ret.), was cited in the tape as being on the "other side," or on the side of later opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

A military fact-finding body headed by Vice Admiral Mateo Mayuga, was organized last year to look into the issue of military involvement in electoral fraud.

Mild reading the result of that investigation has not been made public despite calls from some senators for the release of the findings.

A resolve sacutely

Despite the passage of eight months, Mr Arroyo has not given the public a full accounting of her side in the controversy either.

According to the business source, the group also examined Mr Arroyo's stubborn hold on the top brass in the military but "the controversies of the evening, the various versions of security."

The source, who is a member of the military, added once to be shrouded because of his sensitive role in any talks between Mr Arroyo and the military group.

Bigger picture

"The military is just a small picture, a reflection of the bigger picture," the source said.

Mr Arroyo declared a state of national emergency on Feb. 24 in the face of threats by some officers of the Armed Forces to switch their support from her. They included Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim, then chief of the elite First Scout Ranger Regiment (FSRG), and the Marines led by Col. Ariel Querubin, then commandant of the First Marine Brigade.

Lim and Querubin appeal of Senga of those plans and he was subsequently placed Lim under custody Querubin, who took part in a fruitless show of force in fort Bonifacio a week ago, was later also stripped of his command.

Camp sources have bounded Mr Arroyo since the "hello-Garci" scandal broke in June last year, even triggering an impeachment case against her which her allies in Congress quickly killed.

Politicized military

As one point during the Marine standoff at Bonifacio last week, a body Bishop stopped forward and declared, "The only thing we want is a clean election."

In its coded meaning, it embodied the grievances, the idealism and the adventurism of a politicized military that has kept the Philippines on edge for the past 20 years.

That standoff ended peacefully, and any plans for a coup have been thwarted for the moment. But supporters of the military say that nothing has changed in the dynamics of plotting coups and that the powers of destabilization is sure to continue.

Courting military loyalty

Since the failed coup that set the stage for the 1986 People Power uprising and led to the ouster of Ferdinand Marcos, coup attempts and unending coup rumors have been part of what might be called the Philippine version of democracy.

Mr Arroyo has struggled to hold the loyalty of the generals, getting right of them a chairmanship chief of staff in the past five years.

A cadence of leniency—in which some coup participants have been punished only with a set of push ups—also helps to ensure that the ranks of the military are permeated with politicized officers. With a report from the New York Times-Agence Presse

RP, Thailand crises set back democracy in Southeast Asia

News page A1

democracy as the circle closes on opponents suspected of plotting to overthrow her administration.

Mr Arroyo declared a state of emergency last week to quash the alleged plot, and charges have been filed against more than a dozen suspects. The emergency, which allowed arrests without warrants and intervention of the military, was lifted on Friday.

Ironically, Ms Arroyo is facing the same wrong of "people power" and political opposition that ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos 20 years ago and Joseph Estrada five years ago.

Some gains

Since the end of the Cold War, representative governments has made some impressive gains in Asia, most notably Taiwan and South Korea. Thailand and the Philippines would have counted too, but given their latest setbacks, the region looks less on the global democracy charts.

Southeast Asia includes two of the world's five communist states, Vietnam and Laos, one of its longest running military dictatorships, Burma (Myanmar), and two countries where a single party has held power for decades, Singapore and Malaysia. Cambodia, still recovering from the genocidal Khmer Rouge era, has a democracy of sorts, but it's kept on life support.

Thailand's media, once among Asia's freest, have been severely curbed under Thaksin, who won the last elections in 2005 by a landslide. In the Philippines, some journalists have been killed since 2000 than in any other country, including Iraq, a report by the US-based committee to Protect Journalists said last year.

Rocky road

Analysts cite a number of reasons for democracy's rocky road, including corruption, cronyism, massive vote-buying and patronage systems built on personal leaders rather than ideals.

"Control in this Kingdom and its people who pretend to be saints and think that elsewhere in this country are at war could be free and fair," The Nation, a Thai English-language newspaper, lamented last week.

Rather than Western democracies, some of the region's strongest Asian leaders have looked to China and Singapore, which put economic advancement ahead of civil rights.

The US focus on fighting terrorism, critics claim, ignores the repressive tactics of rights and transparent governments, may as we have slowed progress.

MS ARROYO

THAKSIN

"If [freedom] Asian leaders are concerned and questioned they say 'Ah who lies in glass houses can't throw stones. You're doing the same things you allege we're doing and exercising us for it. Get off our backs.' So it isn't helping the US position," says James Klein, who heads the Thailand and Laos offices of the Asia Foundation, a nonprofit's organization that fosters reform.

Surprise performer

The surprise performer is Indonesia. The nation of 230 million broke off 32 years of military dictatorship in 1998 and has steadily built up its democratic institutions while weathering the devastating 2004 tsunami and a series of terrorist attacks by Muslim militants.

As for Thailand, not everyone is pessimistic about its long term prospects.

Those describing some of its democratic procedures as "theatrical ceremony," Klein says: "I think we are moving slowly forward. I think Thaksin is a blip in a forward movement."

Detlef Leinhemann of the Heinrich Boll Foundation, a German group that promotes democracy in the region, says the grass roots are forging increasingly effective voices to be heard.

"People are embracing and pressuring to their fight," he said. "But more ambitious to be [self-]critical rather to implement what is on paper."

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RP, Russia to ink pact on tourism

[illegible] AFTER IT WAS FIRST DRAFTED, a tourism accord between the Philippines and Russia will be signed this month to boost entry and travel between the two nations.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano and Minister Vladimir Strzhelbitskiy of the Russian Federation's Federal Agency for Tourism are set to sign the bilateral agreement on March 14 in the Philippine Embassy in Moscow.

The accord, initiated in 1998, seeks to simplify border control and customs measures and provide for the exchange of information, training of guides, organization of tours and the establishment of tourism offices in both countries, among other things.

In a statement, Durano noted that Russia was fast becoming a major source of tourists for the Philippines, with the number of Russian visitors growing 108 percent between 2004 and 2005.

"... Russia is on its way to becoming one of the Philippines' top source markets," Durano said.

The Philippines hosted 334 Russian tourists in Cebu, Bohol and Boracay in January.

The World Tourism Organization has ranked Russian travelers ninth on the list of top spenders.

According to a Department of Tourism statement, the DOT has been working with the Department of Foreign Affairs on a visa-upon-arrival scheme for Russian tourists for the benefit of those coming from places in the Russian Federation where the Philippines does not have consular offices.

The DOT has also been pushing for flights between the Philippines and Russia.

Leila B. Salaverria

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, March 6, 2006
1st Week of Lent

1st Reading: Lev 19:1-2, 11-18
Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus said to his disciples, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory with all his angels, he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be brought before him, and as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, so will he do with them, placing the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

"The King will say to those on his right, 'Come, blessed of my Father! Take possession of the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was hungry and you fed me, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'

"Then the righteous will ask him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you food, or thirsty and give you drink, as a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to see you?' The King will answer, 'Truly I say to you, whatever you did for one of the least of these who are my brothers and sisters, you did for me.'

"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Go, cursed people, out of my sight into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels! For I was hungry and you did not give me anything to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me into your house, I was naked and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not visit me.'

"Then, too, will ask 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, thirsty, naked as a stranger, sick or in prison, and did not help you?' To them he will answer thus: 'Truly, I say to you, whatever you did not do for one of these little ones, you did not do for me.'

"And these will go into eternal punishment, but the just to eternal life."

Commentary

We begin our reflections with the words of the Lord to Moses: "Speak to the whole community of Israel, for I, the Lord, your God, am holy." What is the holy God like in nature – irritation of God is that we stand in our variety of holiness what our God looks like or others. It seems basic, so reading, long meaning-filled, creating diplomacy, exploring, establishing ways of now making it more difficult for others to need, hearing God and helping freely, so dismissing and needing by the others' lives are of study, so hearing in your heart, and expressing interfaith – as a word, love your neighbor as you love your God. The [illegible]

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Protesters vow to oust Thaksin

BANGKOK—TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PRO-DEMOCRACY demonstrators staged a protest Sunday against Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, pledging to camp out in the historic heart of the Thai capital until the embattled leader resigns.

Spearheaded by the People's Alliance for Democracy, demonstrators rallied at Sanam Luang, an Royal Field, and later vowed to march in nearby Democracy Monument where they said they would stay until Thaksin quits.

"The rally will go on and we won't stop unless we win," said Suriyasai Katasila, a leader of the alliance that accused Thaksin of grafting, [illegible] constitution, cronyism, tax evasion and serious human rights violations.

Thaksin's wife Pojaman, a prominent businesswoman, urged anti-Thaksin protesters to stop a "civil disobedience" campaign to topple the prime minister, who has rejected calls for his removal and instead called snap elections for April 2.

Opposition parties have vowed to boycott the elections, which Thaksin—whose populist policies have earned him widespread popularity in rural areas—would almost certainly win.

Protesters included an angry farmer and his two sons and some 1,000 members of the Buddhist Santi Asoke sect who prayed and meditated on the grounds showed signs on a central stage on the field and shouted "Dethrone him! Thaksin out!"

A source in the National Intelligence Agency estimated the crowd at about 30,000 and expected it to swell to some 60,000.

"Protest leaders must be cautious and make good plans to control the mob. If violence or chaos occurs, state authorities will take legal action against anyone who violates the law," Thaksin warned Sunday while appealing to supporters to come to the negotiating table "for the sake of democracy and a peaceful society."

At the protest site, police flew four giant kites about 200 metres above the crowds, each inscribed with the message, "Rally to protect democracy. For the law, don't create trouble and disperse peacefully." AP

FBI OFFICIALS collect evidence in the site of Thursday's bomb explosion outside the US Consulate in Karachi, Pakistan, March 5. An American diplomat and three others were killed. ...

Al-Qaida's Zawahri calls for strikes against West

DUBAI—AL-QAEDA DEPUTY leader Ayman al-Zawahri called on Muslims to attack the West in an audio tape posted on the Internet on Saturday, urging similar strikes as those against New York, London and Madrid in recent years.

In a video of his remarks aired by Al Jazeera television, Zawahri also urged the Islamic militant group Hamas not to recognize peace deals signed by the Palestinian Authority with Israel.

He also called on Muslims to boycott countries where satirical cartoons of the Prophet Mohammad had been published, including Denmark, Norway, France and Germany, and said that Muslims should prevent the West from "stealing Muslims' oil."

"Muslims have vital [illegible] issues on the crusader West, especially to its economic infrastructure with strikes that would make it bleed for years," said Zawahri, an Egyptian.

"The strikes on New York, Washington, Madrid and London are the best examples," he said.

"We have to prevent the crusader West from stealing the Muslims' oil which is being drained in the biggest robbery in history," he added. It was not clear if the tape was made before the latest al-Qaida attack last month on a major Saudi oil facility.

"Reaching peace is not a goal by itself ... and no Palestinian has the right to give away a grain of the soil," said Zawahri in comments directed at Hamas. "The usurpers in the Palestinian leadership have sold our Palestine for crumbs ..."

"Giving them legitimacy is against Islam."

Zawahri called on Muslims to give financial support to Islamic fighters, saying they were on the "front line" in defending Islam.

The audio track of the video aired partially by the satellite television channel was posted earlier on a website used by Islamist groups.

Commenting on Zawahri's remarks, Hamas official Osama Hamdan said the group had no intention of recognizing the Israeli... *Reuters*

China to 'uncompromisingly' oppose Taiwan independence

BEIJING—CHINA WILL "UNCOMPROMISINGLY" oppose any moves towards independence in Taiwan, Premier Wen Jiabao told parliament on Sunday, amid heightened tensions between Beijing and Taipei.

"We will uncompromisingly oppose secessionist activities aimed at Taiwan independence," Wen told the opening day of the National People's Congress annual session.

China views Taiwan as part of its territory to be regained by force if necessary. China and Taiwan split in 1949 after the Nationalist forces lost a civil war to the communists and fled to the island.

Tensions spiked last week after Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian formally scrapped an advisory council and guidelines set up to look at eventual reunification with the mainland.

The council was considered largely symbolic and had been dormant since 2000 but Chen's decision infuriated Beijing, which accused Chen of pushing the region towards disaster.

"Everyone wants cross-strait relations to be peaceful and stable, and develop to the mutual benefit of both sides," Wen said.

"Anyone who tries to reverse this major trend will meet certain defeat. It is the common will of all Chinese people to see the ultimate realization of the great cause of national reunification, a process that no one can stop." AFP

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Hamas rejects recognition of Israel despite pressure

REUTERS — CLARIFY MIDEAST GROUP Hamas rejected Russian appeals for it to recognise Israel or demand its armed wing, on last Sunday of her group said on Saturday.

The Moscow visit is the first as foreign foreign power by leaders of Hamas, who are forming a new Palestinian government following a landslide win in the Jan. 25 parliamentary elections.

Russia is hoping to gain a measure of international standing from the three-day visit's talks, opposed by Israel and the United States.

The Hamas charter calls for the destruction of the Jewish state. Both the United States and the European Union have branded Hamas a terrorist organisation. But it is popular among Palestinians for charitable works and has a huge station for freedom from occupation.

Hamas deputy political leader Mousa Abu Marzouk told Reuters in an interview that recognising Israel would negate all Palestinian rights.

"It means a negation of the Palestinian people and their rights and their property of Jerusalem and the holy sites, as well as negation of their right of return. Therefore the recognition of Israel is not on the agenda," Abu Marzouk said.

"We believe that Israel has no right to exist", he added later on remarks to an Arab audience. "Nations will never take such a step."

On Friday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told a Hamas delegation it must recognise Israel's right to exist and abide by terms in peace deals, echoing demands made by the US, the European Union and United Nations.

Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal said Saturday he had rejected a bid from Lavrov for Hamas to disband its armed wing and integrate the gunmen into the general Palestinian police force.

"We have made clear to the officials in Russia that the armed wing [of Hamas] will have no role in the internal situation, and will resist the occupation and defend the whole land", Meshaal said.

Abu Marzouk, who is part of the Hamas delegation in Moscow, described previous Palestinian accords with Israel and said they did not define the Israeli state's borders.

"I gave the Russian officials a white sheet and I asked them to draw me a map of the Israel they want me to recognise and nobody was able to draw the map," he said.

"Therefore how would you want me to recognise something that is so dangerous to the future of the Palestinian people."

Hamas is in the middle of forming a government and expects to name a cabinet within two weeks.

Israel says it will not negotiate with a government led by Hamas, which has carried out nearly 60 suicide bombings against Israelis since a Palestinian uprising erupted in 2000. Hamas has said talks with Israel would be a waste of time.

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Nearly 50 killed in Pakistan clashes

MIRANSHAH, Pakistan—Nearly 50 people were killed in fierce fighting which erupted between pro-Taliban Islamic militants and Pakistani security forces in a tribal region near the Afghan border on Saturday, the military said.

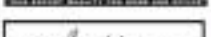
"The fighting broke out when militants seized one government building and attacked others in Miranshah, the main town in the North Waziristan region. The violence spread to the nearby town of Mir Ali, officials said.

"According to our reports 23 militants were killed in Miranshah and 21 in Mir Ali," said military spokesperson Major Gen. Shaukat Sultan.

He said three soldiers were killed and 10 wounded in the violence which erupted as US President George W. Bush was urging Pakistan for talks with President Pervez Musharraf on the war on terrorism.

The violence underlined the problems Musharraf faces in the semi-autonomous, lawless tribal areas, ethnic Pashtun tribal area.

Pashtuns inhabit both sides of the border with Afghanistan and many people, equipped by Taliban, most of whom had fled to and took refuge in Pakistan. Reuters



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EU rejects Iranian proposal on nuclear crisis

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VIENNA—LEADING CHIEF TALKS WITH EU powers over its nuclear activities, Iran offered a two-year moratorium on industrial-scale uranium fuel enrichment while continuing its isolation research, diplomats said.

But EU diplomats rejected the offer saying it would not allay concerns that Tehran secretly wants to build atomic bombs.

One European diplomat familiar with the talks said the EU had demanded up to a 10-year moratorium, which Iran rejected.

"Larijani's offer was no basis for a compromise," one diplomat said, referring to the chief Iranian negotiator, Ali Larijani. "The offer made no sense to us."

The failure of Friday's Vienna encounter between Iran and foreign ministers and diplomats from Germany, France and Britain appears the way for possible UN Security Council action against Iran after the UN nuclear watchdog, the IAEA, meets next week.

EU leaders said Larijani offered nothing that could underpin a solution to the crisis, but that he displayed a more conciliatory mood than in their last face-to-face encounter in the past.

Larijani, in an interview with state-run newspaper Rooz due to be published on Sunday, brushed aside the failure of the talks with the Europeans, and indicated that ultimately what mattered was how the United States negotiated with Iran.

He also criticized Washington, saying it had chosen double standards by signing trade deals with nuclear-power India in recent days, while refusing to cooperate with Iran.

"One land builds atomic bombs and the USA signs contracts with it, and the other wants nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Anarchy reigns in the world," Larijani said.

In their talks, EU3 diplomats said Larijani offered the two-year moratorium on efforts to establish commercial-scale production of enriched uranium, the fuel for civilian nuclear power reactors or, if enriched to a high level, weapons.

He further said Iran would again permit short-notice inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency that it barred in retaliation for a Feb. 4 vote of the IAEA's governing board to report Tehran to the Security Council.

An Iranian diplomat close to the talks said there was "a high possibility to reach an agreement with the EU3" based on Larijani's overture. But other officials in the IAEA board's meeting in Vienna said Iran's offer was unlikely to be the last step in dealing with the crisis.

In their talks, the EU diplomats noted that Iran planned to start installing 3,000 centrifuges later this year.

About 1,500 centrifuges running optimally and non-stop for a year would yield enough highly enriched uranium for an atomic bomb, analysts or scientists say.

"There is interest on the E3/EU arena to encourage the 3,000 centrifuges. So this was no basis for compromise as far as we would see," said one EU3 diplomat. Reuters

Oscars organizers urged to disqualify 'Paradise Now'

HOLLYWOOD—SOME 36,000 PEOPLE HAVE petitioned Oscars organizers to urgently disqualify the Palestinian entry for Sunday's Academy Awards, "Paradise Now," claiming it glorifies suicide bombers.

An Arab-American group active delivered the petition to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences last Friday, 48 hours before the doors at which Hany Abu-Assad's film could strike the Oscar for "best foreign language film."

"Lifting an Oscar nomination to the film glorifies unremorseful activism," said peace activist Nonie Darwish. "It may even encourage future homicide bombings."

The movie, one of five nominees for the foreign film Oscar, tells the story of two childhood friends who volunteer for a double suicide bombing in Tel Aviv and centers on manner their motivations.

"Paradise Now," which won the Golden Globe award for best foreign-language film in January, does not deserve its Oscar nomination because it legitimizes suicide bombings, Darwish maintained.

Oscars officials confirmed they had received the petition but said the film would not be withdrawn from consideration at Hollywood's biggest night, weighted this year with a history of serious politically themed movies.

The petition drive was organized by Nonie Jay, whose 30-year-old son, Saul, died in a suicide bus bombing in Israel on March 5, 2003, exactly three years ahead of Sunday's 78th Academy Awards show.

Darwish said she did not oppose movie-goers seeing the film or the director's right to make it, but insisted that awarding the movie an Oscar would send the wrong message in the volatile and sterile post-Middle East.

"It will say that here is two guys who did terrorism ... and the movie won an Academy award," Darwish said.

"Paradise Now's" Jan. 25 nomination for best foreign film immediately sparked protests both

SCENIC artist Rick Roberts paints gold the Oscar statues on the red carpet outside the Kodak Theater during preparations for the 78th Annual Academy Awards in Los Angeles, March 4.

in Israel and in the United States, drawing fire also for the academy's decision to tag the movie's origin as "Palestine."

Sponsors have said that the Israeli government quietly lobbied the Academy to have it reclassify the Palestinian Authority, but Oscar officials denied coming under any pressure from either Israel or any Jewish group.

However, the academy did enroll whether to reconsider the disputed movie as coming from the "Palestinian Territories" or some other tag. AFP

Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman earn pre-Oscars 'dishonors'

LOS ANGELES—SUPERSTAR TOM CRUISE, his fiancee Katie Holmes and his ex-wife Nicole Kidman were dishonor favorites at the annual Golden Raspie awards, an Oscars spoof held a day ahead of the big awards.

Tom Cruise and his pregnant paramour scooped the lowest award in the Razzies several years after the actor dubbed Tuesday gay of 2005, but they had to share their shame with Oprah Winfrey's couch, the Eiffel Tower and "Exit's Baby."

Cruise, 42, famously announced he was in love with Holmes by jumping on talk show queen Winfrey's sofa during a broadcast last year. Cruise then proposed to Holmes, 26, atop Paris' Eiffel Tower in June and announced they were expecting in October, all amid a massive glare of tabloid publicity.

Razzie founder John Wilson said the formerly ultra-private Cruise deserved the award because he made a spectacle of himself when he declared "indefinitely pregnant" in front of reporters on the Eiffel Tower and jump up and down like the monkey in "Curious George" on Oprah Winfrey's couch."

Cruise's Oscar-winning ex, Kidman, shared the Razzie award for the worst screen couple of 2005 with Will Ferrell for their movie version of the 1960s television show "Bewitched."

"Top Gun" and "Mission: Impossible" star Cruise, separated from Kidman, 39, in 2001 after 11 years of marriage, later divorced her and began dating Holmes after at least one other high-profile romance in April last year.

In the most extreme celebrity category, Cruise and Holmes beat "The Simpsons"—singing sister Ashlee, Jessica and Jessica's estranged husband Nick Lachey; new mom Britney Spears; and hotel heiress Paris Hilton in the category.

The couple dubbed "familiar" reigned over a pool marked by a string of tired remakes and movie sequels last for the comedy adventure "Son of the Blank," which beat in Saturday's show spread with eight nominations.

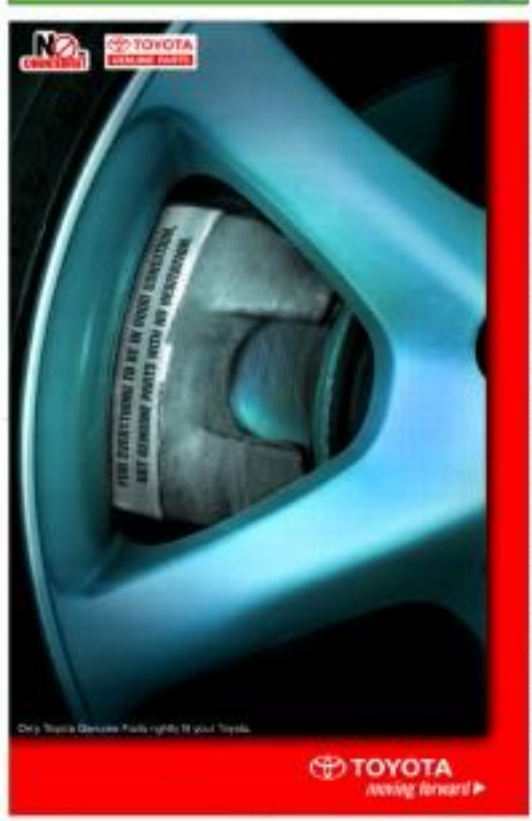
The genre-red romantic comedy "Dirty Love," written by and starring former Playboy Playmate Jenny McCarthy, took home the most gold spray-painted statuettes with three at the 26th annual Razzie Awards held in Hollywood.

The blonde bombshell McCarthy won for worst actress and worst screenplay, while her former husband, John Asher, took home worst director dishonors at the much sweeter awards.

US comic actor Bob Schneider was disgraced with the award for the worst performance by an actor last year for his disparaging Dracaen "Denver Hipsters' European Hijinks," while heart-throb Hayden Christensen was voted supporting actor for his role in "Star Wars Episode III: The Revenge of the Sith."

Wilson won for worst supporting actress for her role in the campy horror flick "House of Wax," while "Son of The Blank," an ill-thought sequel to Jim Carrey's 1994 hit comedy the way, was chosen worst remake or sequel.

But none of the shamed stars took the lead from last year's winner Halle Berry and showed up at the ceremony to collect their gold spray-painted plastic raspberries, which organizers say are worth as much as $1.97. AFP



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OPINION

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Killing Rizal again

IN DEFENDING ITS INVASION OF PRESS FREEDOM, the Arroyo administration is battling the legacy of Jose Rizal and our other founding fathers. It is for these reasons why we urge the Supreme Court, not only to continue with the oral arguments and the deliberations on the constitutionality of Proclamation 1017, but to decide, unequivocally, against it. The justices of the high court

EDITORIAL

do now engaged in a dialogue with the heroes who fought for our freedom and shaped our nation.

We do not know if President Macapagal-Arroyo and her chosen advisers realize it, but in sending policemen to The Daily Tribune newsroom, deploying troops to keep outside cover TV networks, and warning journalists who may prove critical of the administration, they are trampling on the memory of Rizal and other anti-colonial democrats who fought for our liberties.

As constitutionalist Joaquin Bernas, S.J., writes in his much-consulted casebook: Freedom of expression "was one of the burning issues during the Filipino campaign against Spain. Fire, in the writings of the Filipino propagandists, and, finally in the armed revolt against the mother country."

That "subversive" clause in Proclamation 1017, which arouses the media of recklessly engaging the claims of alleged conspirators against the State, threatens to undo Rizal's work, and those of the other democrats who have followed him. It threatens to turn citizens inflicted in our duties into proof of sedition. It threatens to turn the necessarily adversarial nature of media, with their constitutionally defined role, into evidence of rebellion. It threatens to turn media's very openness and accessibility to everyone in the public square with an opinion or a grievance into a public challenge against the government.

The Supreme Court must remind the Arroyo administration, gently but confidently and firmly, not to kill Rizal all over again.

We trust that the high court will reject the "new argument" offered by Presidential Legal Counsel Ed Nachura: to wit, that the cases against Proclamation 1017 must be dismissed because they have become moot and academic with the lifting of the state of national emergency.

As the high court has proven before, the mere lifting of a controversial act cannot by itself bar the Supreme Court from passing judgment on it.

Even more important, we insist that the justices resolve that any so-called chilling effect, which is what the media fear most, cannot be so easily switched off, and that their role as judges may be precisely to raise the temperature of the body politic.

The post-1017 pronouncements of the justice secretary himself, that at least seven more journalists are under close government watch because of possibly seditious commentary or reportage, prove that the chilling effect is a continuing concern.

For this and similar reasons, the high court must accept the responsibility to render judgment on the issue.

We also trust that while the Supreme Court is no trier of facts, it is not blind to reality. The circumstances behind the implementation of Proclamation 1017 offer clear evidence of grave abuse of discretion: the arrest of Ilda Gutierrez on Feb. 24, ostensibly on the strength of a presidential document the arresting officers had not even seen; the decision of the police to send government agents into the newsroom, something Palace officials did not know about but defended after the fact; and so on.

The Arroyo administration hides behind the fiction of political questions, but its understanding is based on pre-1987 jurisprudence. Under the 1987 Constitution, the political question has been redefined, and the Supreme Court has been empowered with the duty "to determine whether or not there has been a grave abuse of discretion amounting to lack or excess of jurisdiction on the part of any branch or instrumentality of the Government."

For this and similar reasons, the high court must judge Proclamation 1017 as unconstitutional, and its pernicious effects on the practice of journalism and the exercise of the freedoms of expression unconscionable.

The Supreme Court must come to the defense of the State, by proclaiming yet again that free speech and a free press form part of the arsenal of democracy.

SC shouldn't cop out on PP 1017

TOMORROW, THE SUPREME COURT WILL hear oral arguments on a number of petitions to declare unconstitutional Proclamation 1017, which declared "a state of national emergency." 1017 is so transparently unconstitutional, an abuse of authority the tribunal is widely expected to strike it down. Which is the reason, according to observers, that the President quickly lifted it — to make clear once in the high Court's most solemn session and, therefore, present the justices from issuing a decision, thus saving her from the humiliation of being rebuffed by the tribunal. (Another theory is that she was given a hint by US Ambassador Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Christopher Hill, who is scheduled to arrive this week, that the United States does not look kindly on Proclamation 1017.)

The justices — most of whom are appointees of President Macapagal-Arroyo — may do just that: declare the case "moot and academic" (the pro-formula for letting presidents off the hook for actions laws already have lifted) and dismiss it. That would be a cop-out. People would suspect that the Supreme Court dodged the issue — as it is wont to do in difficult cases — so as not to embarrass the President.

People would think that the justices did it on their own, out of gratitude to the President, or under pressure from Malacañang. Which would be very bad for the image of the high court, which is supposed to be an independent body.

I agree with those who believe that the Supreme Court should still decide on the issue, even if 1017 has already been lifted. The Court should not run away from its responsibility. It should guide the government and the people on what is the right thing to do should the same circumstances arise again in the future.

Without the Court's pronouncements, what is to prevent the administration from imposing again a similar proclamation? Already, the

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

Department of Justice has warned media that 1017 would be reimposed if they "don't behave" (translation: don't criticize the government or else ...). In short, the threats and harassment spawned by 1017 are still there and, in fact, being formalized by the police and the DOJ.

"If a lot of important issues will be left hanging — the legality of warrantless arrests, the raid on The Daily Tribune, the attempt to arrest party-list representatives — if the court does not rule on them," Senator President Franklin Drilon said.

Ibarra Gutierrez III of the Institute of Human Rights said that "even if ... the proclamation has already been lifted, we would like to insist that the Supreme Court make a ruling to prevent it from abuse by the government."

Indeed, there are precedents where the tribunal still ruled on important issues even when the cases had become moot and academic — as to prevent a repeat of the same situation in the future.

We are confident that the Supreme Court will not shirk its duty and responsibility.

* * *

Right now, even when 1017 has already been lifted, the threats and harassment to media and journalists continue. The police guards at The Daily Tribune have been pulled out, but warning to soldiers, charges of sedition have filed against ex-publisher and two of its columnists. The DOJ warned that the administration will not hesitate to reimpose 1017 if media "do not behave" (translation: stop airing criticisms and negative news against the government or else ...).

The police (which Lumen went on modeling about the business of journalism) even have the temerity to announce that they will issue "guidelines" to media. And others asked from (but) can be made the guidelines when they don't know anything about media work. The police warned that the rules would be similar to those of the Journalists' Code of Ethics, and the guidelines issued by the Philippine Press Institute (PPI) and the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas (KBP). But if the media already have guidelines, what's the use of issuing similar ones?

* * *

BACKGROUND INTELLIGENCE: The Philippine oil industry is talking about an undercurrent/rumor/report/story behind the idea of creating a "super body" with an arrogant sounding name that would practically control one of the most strategic industries in the country. This shadow agency would have been headed by a "presidential assistant" (the undersecretary was hoping to be the one appointed by Malacañang) from the President's wife (said name) around existing line agencies, attended the name and government-owned and -controlled corporation (GOCC). In effect, another layer in the government's bloated bureaucracy. Ultimately, the idea was shelved after strong objections from stakeholders, economists and legislators.

The talk is that this "special" continues to pursue by position and sweeps his boss' endorsement. Recently, he was seen on television making sweeping pronouncements, forcing his boss to correct the statements. Now, he is said to be in trouble. The undersecretary is also a known lobbyist; he created enmity with his superior in the cabinet or agency he served a few years back.

Guidelines

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

RAUL GONZALEZ SAYS THAT EVEN AFTER 1017 is lifted, media will still have to comply with certain guidelines concerning coverage. What arrant nonsense. Someone should remind him that the origin of our current mess is that his boss couldn't follow a few simple guidelines concerning vote-thievery.

What are those guidelines? First, do not lie. If you say you're not going to run, whether on the ground of Jose Rizal or not, you do not run. Second, do not cheat. You do not rig the public counting particularly in the form of funding fertilizer and funds from Jueteng and the PCSO which are meant to alleviate the plight of farmers and poor folk, to line the highways with billboards displaying your grinning face and proclaiming the things you've done for farmers and poor folk. Third, do not steal. You do not lift to the lowest rung Comelec officials even to walk on rare legs and demand, to win over the most popular candidate by a million votes, bad go on to pass that off as an improprietary oversight.

Those are the simplest guidelines in the world. Hell, a seven-year-old understood them.

GMA herself said before she lifted the opposition, also called 1017, that it would depend on whether she was satisfied that the military and police had the country under control. When arrant nonsense too. The country does not exist at her sufferance. It exists at the country's sufferance. And "sufferance" captures the feeling completely.

If lifting 1017 had truly depended on her being satisfied that the military and police had things under control, she would never have lifted 1017. It is not merely that she will never be satisfied until she makes absolutely sure, momentarily. It is also that her military and police will never have this country under control. This country has shown repeatedly it does not like opposition, also called martial law to fact, this country has repeatedly shown it does not like tyrants, also called dictators.

When GMA lifted 1017, I had to blog. I had a feeling of déjà vu. Her aides on TV use the same one Marcos cracked to the past. Then, every time Marcos agreed to liberalize or lift an opposition measure he promptly repeated the public he thankful. It was as if he was doing the country a favor, designing to heed public clamor. Well, I am not thankful. The fact that GMA declared de facto martial law, however temporarily in the guise of emergency rule, the fact that she still insists to collect it in the form of "guidelines" to media — and the fact that the prospect of martial law continues to dangle over our heads (Marcos suspended the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus after the 1971 bombing of Plaza Miranda as a trial balloon — is because the prelude to full blown martial law a year later). These are suppositions by, in and of themselves.

GMA did not lift 1017 out of the goodness of her heart. She lifted it out of the fear in the citizens' minds. While active, I am deeply glad this country did not give in to martial law. I am deeply sad that we had to fight back from the start. Media, in particular, have to be commended here. They stood their ground.

The lifting of 1017 is not something to be thankful for, the declaration of 1017 is something to be furious about. I remember one pastor from Cory's time when she was fighting the very real coups that came her way: "By binding democracy by the ways of democracy." That is an awe-inspiring line, and one that shows up the folly of GMA's tack. If not indeed the blight of her existence. There is no other way to defend democracy except by the ways of democracy. You cannot defend democracy by the ways of dictatorship. You can only defend dictatorship by the ways of dictatorship.

That was how Cory stopped the coups, by defending democracy by the ways of democracy. By meeting the threat against democracy not by denying democracy but by affirming democracy. Contrary to reason, democracy is not the weakest system in the world and disarming the strongest one. It's the other way around. Democracy is the strongest system in the world and dictatorship the weakest one. That is as because of size thing. Democracy has the mandate of the people. It has the support of the people, and in the end it can count on the people to defend it. Dictatorship has the reverse. It has the guns, it has the support only of the greedy and the sycophantic, and in the end it can only count on guns and bullets to prop it up.

The part about the people being counted upon to defend democracy when it is threatened is particularly telling. The people did that in defend the Cory administration, taken over its tanks and reformists, when military institutions rose to topple it. Media came together and published a pooled editorial in 1989 condemning the December coup. Civil society, the Church, the business community, ordinary folk turned to people-power all over again in protest the gains of Edsa. At times like yes, you cannot find a greater threat to government than the coups Cory faced. She stopped them by rousing the people to stop the coups. The coups did stop after 1989. Finally, absolutely, and that is the salient point: GMA and undid their fires all over again, seemingly permanently.

That is the only way to stop a coup. Or at least that is the only way to stop a coup and save democracy. You declare martial law to stop a coup — or a "subjunctural of support," as Comissio Soliga continues to call Danilo Lim's action — you are saying you distrust the people, you are saying they will never lift a finger to defend you. You obliterate the rights of the people in stop a coup, you are not protecting the people from a coup, you are protecting yourself from the people.

In this country, patronism is not the last refuge of scoundrels. Censorship is.

Playing games with the Court

"[A] deliberate act of a state of rebellion [or state-group] is an outer superfluity . . . . The Court finds that such a declaration is devoid of any legal significance. Put all legal issues, the declaration is deemed not to exist."—Sandakan v. Santander Insurance (2006)

BUT WHAT HAVE THE MINIONS OF PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo, the authority of President Arroyo, been pulverizing?

Proclamation No. 1017 is not the first time that President Arroyo has stayed with the same lineage of the commander in chief powers. She knows that as commander in chief, the President has the power to suppress rebellion. She may call on the armed forces to prevent or suppress lawless violences in violation. The Court recognizes that she is the best judge of whether it has become necessary.

She resorted to it in 2001 and again in 2003, and now once again by Proclamation 1017. Let us review the first two times.

On June 7, 2001, President Arroyo, faced by an "all-out" and violent mob armed with explosives, firearms, bladed weapons, clubs, stones and other deadly weapons" attempting to break into Malacañang, issued Proclamation No. 38 declaring that there was a "state of rebellion" in the National Capital Region. She thereafter issued General Order No. 1 directing the armed forces and the Philippine National Police to suppress the rebellion. She likewise issued all pertinent implementing orders.

Petitions were brought before the Supreme Court challenging the validity of the proclamations and of the warrantless arrests. But before the Court could decide on the case, President Arroyo lifted the declaration of the state of rebellion. Hence, the issue of the validity of the proclamation became "moot" and the Court did not need to. Mr. Arroyo, therefore, was able to sidestep the challenge to her proclamation. As to arrests, the Supreme Court said they could only be carried out in accordance with the Rules of Court.

It happened again in 2003. It—the wave of the Oakwood incident. President Arroyo issued on July 27, 2003 Proclamation No. 427 declaring a state of rebellion and calling out the armed forces to suppress it. Proclamation were filed challenging the validity of the proclamation. But again before the Court could decide on the issue, President Arroyo lifted the proclamation of a state of rebellion.

This time, however, in spite of the fact that the issue of the validity of the proclamation had become "moot," the Court insisted on making some clarifications. The Court said:

"To prevent similar questions from recurring, we seize this opportunity to finally lay to rest the validity of the declaration of a state of rebellion in the exercise of the Presidents calling out power, the issuance of the policies notwithstanding.

". . . [S]o calling out the armed forces, a declaration of a state of rebellion is an outer superfluity. At most, it only gives armor to the nation that such a state exists and that the armed forces may be called to prevent or suppress it . . . This Court finds such a declaration is devoid of any legal significance. Put all legal issues, the declaration is deemed not to exist.

"Should there be any 'confusion' generated by the issuance of Proclamation No. 427 and General Order No. 4, we thereby state . . . the term declaration of a state of rebellion cannot mention or evoke constitutionally pinned rights. Indeed, as it is only a 'state' that has been declared by the President, a state of rebellion is somewhat more nuanced than a simple declaration of a state of rebellion could not bring about these conditions: . . .

"For the sake of avoidance, apprehensions that the military and police authorities may resort to warrantless arrests are likewise unfounded, to [select] Petit, supra, majority of the Court held that: 'The qualifying or supporting the rebellion, or conducting rebellious acts or any violations or wars of persons suspected of rebellion, as provided under Section 5, Rule 113 of the Rules of Court, if the circumstances so warrant. The warrantless arrest feared by petitioners is, thus, not based on the declaration of a state of rebellion. To reiterate, the warrantless arrest allowed under the said section arises for the crime of rebellion whether or not the President has declared a state of rebellion, as long as the requisites for a valid warrantless arrest are present.'

I have two questions (built) the meaning and the legal consequences of a declaration of a "state of rebellion." Such declaration adds no new powers. Our President, nations guardian that she is of the "rule of law," accepts that clarification. But, desiring to maintain power which is the essence of a state of rebellion does not give the executed declaring a "state of rebellion" forward, she proclaimed "a state of national emergency" to let her minions go their merry way. Remember?

After what a wife could then a director see when nation is law in charge?

A better country, a better world

"I have tried in my objective, I cannot claim to be objective[d]."—E. Wright Mills

IN 1993, SOMEBODY ENGRAVED THESE WORDS ON A 1/4" x 18" piece of wood and hung it on the wall behind my office desk.

"When you a those, I can no longer remember, has the words no double have influenced my life through the 8 ids., via Christopher Dole Register and Peter Timm. My retirement from the writing pro-

ending, I can

Commentary

Eugenio Dennis Apostol

sound another's power, plot sound against Proclamation 1017.

My views never in journalism—where I also had to be objective—cannot be separated from the crusade of the Filipino people against Marcos' martial law or President Estrada's shenanigans.

In [which], when it seemed then Editor 1 or 2 had sent us out-of-our-projects for a better life on a better moment, I "organized" an Education Investment through the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWPPP). We started by asking people not to give to Erap like anymore if they wanted greater social development. Instead, we asked them to donate or collect a dime book to public schools and Professor now they would help improve the schools and the quality of teaching in their respective barangays.

With the war's, we already knew that organizing communities and the public schools, by themselves, could not go some help. My dear friend, the late Bro. Raul Roco, told us about Republic Act 6125, Makpo-A-School Law of 1970. "Im my matter," he said, "that there is actually a law that gives 1,500 persons tax incentives to private sector volunteers to public schools." Unfortunately that incentive was never implemented. Indeed to more or less remind the public schools rights in the communities where they do business! Indeed, it could.

Today, after three years of implementation, in different parts of the country, the Education Investment is poised to become a genuine national movement of school communities. For 2006, we will be fielding community development coordinators who are specially trained to set up Education Working Groups—essentially education underboards—tasked with drafting and implementing school improvement plans.

Active with this, we are introducing the concept of performance-based private sector support, which views every basic simple dollar, Quiz to help ensure public schools[1] to ensure for a maximum impact in the dollars' overall improvement in learning outcomes in the public schools.

And don't now all. Teachers are the heart of the Education Revolution. Their ability to inspire confidence in their students directly and to love well their subjects are an essential from the overall outcomes. The Metrobarge the Education Program of Education Revolution 2006 scales up in accordance to work as the master plans will be so.

Here's how Dr. Edon Cabrera, the recently retired Batman City high school principal and expert teachers down this key Metrobarge the Mission's experience:

"The Education Revolution via the Metrobarge the Mission Program came to Tenfold Batman City Division quietly with, our bodies, but the results more nothing less than a revolution. Since then, the Division of Batman is united change my life and those of other participants.

"I had been a Department of Education supervisor/district for 11 years and had been contemplating retirement at age 62. In recent years, the financial responsibility and remuneration that I received as a supervisor/district were not the real reason in delivering education—the classroom!

"I had been trained to coached, not as a financial manager, and, do those early vocations when I was able to be in the classroom. I saw the many challenges that teachers have every day and the many difficulties they encounter, like large classes, overloaded curriculum, inadequate facilities, poor pay, family problems, and the teacher herself. Ill-equipped to use teaching strategies that could ease her burden. What was really alarming was the prevailing opinion—that hard work does not pay.

"I ran for four days in the Metrobarge the Mission training in Bocaue and every day, during reflection and prayer, I realized that the real People Power must come from within ourselves; that we can only change people and realities if the change starts within us.

"To effect a real education revolution, there must be a sincere, actual 'Kumbit sa Panginoon' from the 'ako' [sister] mentality to 'kami' [sister] mentality. The collective progress must supersede the personal, the common good must be advanced first.

"I retired on May 15, 2005. Since then, I have volunteered to join the Metrobarge the Mission back in Metrobarge. We conducted trainings in Bocaue City for Dagbol Caraga, in Calapang City Baptist Seminar under superintendent Myrna Mercado, in Pagsanjan Baptist Seminar under Superintendent Ishmael, in Baliuag under superintendent Gloria Bentigue, in Aguinaldo Bel Air with superintendent Beverly Timog, in Tagaytay did but with superintendent Fe Manrique, in Silang City with superintendent Lucy Cuesta, and in Batangas City with superintendent Ruth Mabilog.

"The results of these training sessions were very inspiring. Participants would report to us changes in their attitudes. "Nung bagong sa ng pakiramdam ko, Ma'am, hihi ng mga teacher ko sa school, hihingi na akong tulong sila."

"They would report also that they are excited as well. Ma'am, pinalitan ko 'yung aklatan ko sa dam ng aklat. Ma'am, I've changed the sign outside my office door, I love it sign. 'Please come in anytime' daw'ter sabi sa Ma'am, may bago sa aming pag-aral. Pinimod pulitan para charming!"

"We plan to bring the Metrobarge the Mission Program to all colleges may reached, at ang mga kasi ay makapag dahil sa binubang ganap mark. Sa 'yung maaliwan natin sa ilaman at sa Ilog Mapalad. Dinamol ko na ang suggestion

Drug problem much bigger than it is made to appear

LETTERS

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Across the NATION

Lomibao: Bishops not on arrest list

DAGUPAN CITY—DIRECTOR GENERAL ARTURO Lomibao has denied reports that Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz and three other Catholic bishops who are critical of the Arroyo administration, have been included in Malacañang's "order of battle."

"While nobody (There's nothing)," Lomibao said later on Sat- urday, "I should know. I am also close to Malacañang."

But Cruz said Lomibao did not know everything. "This is one matter that he does know," the bishop said on parish.

Cruz earlier said he and three other bishops in Luzon had been on the list of people to be arrested on suspicion of connecting with groups planning to overthrow the Arroyo administration.

He said he first received the information about his supposed arrest from a source close to Malacañang. On Sunday, he said a Manila-based reporter called him to get his reaction about a government intelligence report on his impending arrest.

"The reporter saw the report. He called up and asked me about it," Cruz said.

He said Malacañang could be low on his stall because of his "jaunting" sojourn last year. He welcomed fallen members of President Macapagal-Arroyo's family in jaunting, an illegal numbers game, and election fraud.

In Pampanga, retired Lt. Gen. Romeo Dominguez denied a TV re- port identifying him as a member of a planned junta to oust Ms Arroyo unconstitutional.

"It's a complete accusation," Dominguez said in a phone interview. Yolanda Garcia-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, and Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Chief

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NPA AMBUSH AFTERMATH

480 soldiers to be retrained

By Felipe P. Celino
PDI Visayas Bureau

JAMINDAN, CAPIZ—ABOUT 480 SOLDIERS of the Army's 47th Infantry Battalion will be retrained here almost three months after a New People's Army (NPA) ambush in Iloilo that resulted in the death of nine of their comrades.

Lt. Col. Mariano Antonio Perez, the newly replaced battalion commander, said the retraining at the 3rd Infantry Division headquarters here started in Camp Peralta in Santa Nieves in April and May was part of the Army's efforts to enhance the soldiers' capabilities.

The lessons will be explored by members of Task Force Nieves, an in-an service anti-insurgency unit operating on Panay Island.

Nieves, who led the 47th IB for a year and two months, will be reassigned to the Army's national headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo. He was replaced by Lt. Col. Ted Bollos, a former division comptroller, in a simple ceremony on the 9th.

In December last year, soldiers returning to their camp were ambushed as they were passing through a narrow road in Sitio Sinalbiran, Barangay Manlut-a near Jamindan, Iloilo.

A truck loading the military convoy and with 32 soldiers on board ran over a land mine planted by the rebels. After the explosion, the guerrillas appeared and started shooting at the soldiers.

Killed were Staff Sergeants Alexander Luis, Milligrades Montemayor, Potenciano Villaverte and Roland Patay, Privates First Class Rambolt Seol, Rodolfo Pena, James Bryan Angeles and Dave Villamor, and Corporal Marlo Bedias.

Twenty other soldiers were wounded.

Despite the casualties, Perez believed the NPA struck.

"It was a mere show of force. They wanted to project that they are still strong. Actually, they are not," he said.

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ROUNDUP

Cracks in mining area

COMBO'S CITY—Land cracks have been discovered in Tampakan, South Cotabato where a mining company operates, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Central Mindanao said. Jona Mauricio, DMGB director, said the cracks were not caused by the operations of Sagittarius Mines Inc. but were "attributed to and/or caused by the existence of old springs." Mauricio said the bureau had sent a team to check on land cracks reportedly found in Bagumbay on Sitio Kulaluk. The MGB has been monitoring areas where possible landslides could occur following the St. Bernard landslide tragedy in Southern Leyte two months ago.

Jaelling Rubio /PDI Mindanao Bureau

Radioman posts bail

DUMAGUETE CITY—Police arrested a radio broadcaster facing a P720-million libel suit filed by Negros Governor Pryde Henry Teves on Friday morning. Rolando Sungga Jr., station manager of Radio Mindanao Network here, later posted bail. Last year, Pryde said Sungga after the broadcaster's unchecked findings of the Commission on Audit of irregularities in the city government's expenditures involving the procurement of P50-million traffic light system, purchase of jeeps and supposed excesses during the city's centennial celebration. Police also detained one other suspect.

Franklin Caliguid /PDI Mindanao Bureau

Cop dies in robbery

COMBO'S CITY—A policeman was killed on March 1 when two men shot him three times over 17 pieces of gold while onboard a passenger jeepney in Cotabato City, police said. PNP Director Chief Superintendent Elmo Sarmiento identified the policeman as PO3 Ray Ambot of the Presidential Security Group. Ambot was on board a passenger jeepney when he was shot by two men. Police said the two men boarded the jeepney and shot Ambot three times in the head. The two suspects fled on board a motorcycle driven by a third man.

Jaelling Rubio /PDI Mindanao Bureau

Low birth registration

COMBO'S CITY—The percentage of live birth registration remains low in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, officials of the National Statistics Office said. NSO-ARMM director Commissioner Philippine Marshall "some" Islamic practices and lack of education are hindrances to the smooth implementation of the government's civil registry programs in the region. He said the NSO has embarked on a process information campaign and a "mobile registration" system in the remote villages of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. He said ARMM Gov. Zaldy Ampatuan has pledged P75 million for the project.

Charlie Saluan, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Tower parts stolen

MAGALOD CITY—About 2 M pieces of tower parts worth about P100,000 were found stolen Tuesday in a warehouse in Brgy. Poblacion here. Tomas Romero, manager of the National Transmission Corp. in Barangay Villa Magsaysay, Tomas Reyes manager Cesario Rivera secured the 2 permits who were not stopped, the owners might be behind the theft of tower parts. Police said cases blackmail in northern Negros Occidental. He called the attention of all scrapyard owners in the area where Tomas Salamillan Sheet Materials in her region. Similar Gen. Pedro Manuel, provincial police director, said he assured Briones that he would deploy police in the area.

Chris Bonoan, PDI Regional Bureau

Village chair shot dead

CAMP PEDRO T. LIM, Laguna—An unidentified gunman shot dead a barangay captain in San Pablo City on Saturday. Police said Antonio Perayon, village chair of Barangay San Rafael, was about to leave a drugstore along Rizal St. in Barangay Poblacion at around 1:45 p.m. when the suspect shot him in the head and fled. He was declared dead on arrival at the San Pablo District Hospital.

Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Standoff in Tanauan ends in violence

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

TANAUAN CITY—THE ALMOST one-month standoff in the Tanauan City Hall saw a violent end on Friday as about 1,000 policemen dispersed supporters of defeated Mayor Alfredo Corona who had barricaded the building since Feb. 7.

More than 100 supporters of Corona, including two Catholic priests, were injured when police men armed with guns and truncheons stormed the City Hall premises at around 4 a.m.

The injured were brought to the Dr. Daniel Mercado Medical Center.

Negotiators

Councilor Arnulfo Rosas said parish priest Dindulfo Collado and his assistant, Fr. Cielo de Gregorio, were negotiating with Corona when the police officers entered the mayor's office.

During the scuffle, Rosas said the priests were dubbed as the rioters.

A few minutes earlier, a bomb exploded at the back of the building, prompting the police to clear the area, said City police chief, Supt. Edmund Abu.

No one was hurt in the explosion.

Abu said the dispersal operation was not illegal. "We just implemented the order of the Comelec and the [Department of the Interior and Local Government] which installed Dindo Temenegatao as the duly elected mayor of Tanauan," he told the reporters.

Abu said members of the Air Force's Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit based in Fernando Air Base in Lipa City found a dynamite stick with a blasting cap at the mayor's office.

Aquino, who was declared rightful winner in the 2004 elections by the Commission on Elections, arrived at the mayor's office at around 10:20 a.m.

She appealed for calm amid the tension at City Hall. "Let us all forget the political bickering and instead work together toward the development of Tanauan," she told a crowd of about 500 followers who greeted her.

Asked what she would do to bring back normal operations at City Hall, she said, "We would first clean the City Hall of the garbage that the [previous] mayor left behind. We have an order to immediately release the salary of the employees."

It was the first time that Aquino set foot at the seat of the city government after the Comelec's Second Division issued a resolution on Dec. 22, 2005, declaring her the winner in the mayoral elections.

Arrested

Abu said two supporters of Corona had been arrested and would be charged with disobedience and disrespect to police authorities.

The protesters also destroyed a van owned by television giant ABS-CBN. Corona's supporters have accused the media of being biased against the former mayor.

Trucks, buses and fire trucks were placed as roadblocks in three major entry points to the City Hall.

Corona moved to the church, together with his supporters.

Abu said that of the 960 policemen deployed in the area, almost 600 were members of the Crowd Dispersal Management (CDM) unit from the Calabarzon.

Thirty private security guards were also sent to maintain security in the area.

He said the Task Force Tanauan decided to retain about 600 policemen to guard the City Hall premises from protesters who might try to regain control of the building.

Calabarzon police director Chief Supt. Prospero Noble led the police contingent that stormed the City Hall.

Negros governor orders relocation of families in disaster-prone areas

BUNAGUETE CITY—NEGROS Oriental Gov. George Arnaiz has directed municipal mayors and barangay leaders in the province to relocate families living in disaster-prone areas to their localities to prevent fatalities in case of natural calamity.

At a meeting of the Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council on Friday, Arnaiz also directed all local government units in the province to submit disaster preparedness plans for review by the PDCC.

The meeting was called in the aftermath of the killer landslides in Barangay Guinsuguran, St. Bernard town in Southern Leyte that buried more than 900 persons.

Financial help

The provincial government has appropriated P500,000 to help the victims of the tragedy.

Arnaiz requested the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, as well as the National Irrigation Administration, to review and validate claims of flash flood-prone areas in the province.

Landslides brought about by incessant rains occurred in the town of Tayasan last month and destroyed three hectares of agricultural land. Six rice area experts—all hurt as the area was in their residences.

The landslide was the second to be reported in the village in almost 20 years.

Other disaster-prone areas in the province are in the southern towns of Negros Oriental.

Siaton and other southern towns were cut off from the rest of the province for three days some two years ago when the Siaton River overflowed and eroded the foundation of the bridge leading to the town.

In Sta. Catalina town, several people occupying the riverbank were killed by landslides in the past several years. —Alex R. Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau

Sorsogon gov starts Cha-cha ball rolling

SORSOGON CITY—GOV. SALVADOR Lee has initiated a drive which aims to inform the public about the pros and cons of proposed changes in the Constitution, especially on the issue of shifting to a parliamentary form of government.

In asking the longstanding Presidentiables for funding, Lee said it was the duty of the government to let the people know and understand the repercussions of the change.

Lee said P1.2 million would be spent for the production of leaflets and brochures detailing facts about the issues, and for the formation of a speakers' bureau that would explain to the public everything it needed to know.

"There is a well-informed populace can make an intelligent decision on crucial matters like Charter change," he said.

The information drive is set to start next week, Lee said.

Rep. Jose Solis said he would help the governor in his efforts, saying the proposed Charter change was crucial to the future of the country.

In a speech before the First Rizal Vice Mayors League Regional Convention, Solis said it was the duty of every elective official to explain to their constituents the advantages and disadvantages of the change, being proposed. —Bobby Q. Labadan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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Discovery of rare flower opens tourism opportunity for Iriga

IRIGA CITY—AFTER OFFICIAL confirmation of the discovery of a new species of fruitfloria, a rare flower that smells like rotting flesh when in bloom here, the city government is cashing in on the opportunity to sell its plans to visitors through a tour of the plants' habitat in this city.

Mayor Madeleine Alfelor-Gazmen said the city had already requested a certification the new species, named *Rafflesia irigaensis*, from Dr. Domingo Madulid, plant specialist and curator of the National Museum.

Gertrude Girlie Inocian-Aclan, a researcher from the Camarines Sur State Agricultural College who first validated the existence of the new Rafflesia species, said the certificate was given during a meeting Tuesday at the National Museum's office in Manila.

Alfelor-Gazmen said she called for a meeting of village officials and the City Development Council the same day in order to there of the city government's immediate measures to preserve the Rafflesia's habitat.

"Aside from the important contribution to the biodiversity of the world, *Rafflesia irigaensis* will endure as our icon to how local and foreign tourists," the mayor said.

She said she had ordered the construction of a road to the village to ease the movement of tourists who climbed Asog on Feb. 9, which the city government sponsored to promote biodiversity as part of the Triagle festivities.

Since 1980, four species of Rafflesia have so far been found in the Philippines and 16 more species were discovered in the forests of Indonesia and Malaysia.

Alfelor-Gazmen said the city government and the CSSAC were campaigning for the declaration of Asog as a protected area to preserve biodiversity in the area. As per Iscander Jr., *PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

A TIGNAMANON WOMAN makes a rice offer a performance of Bangsawan, a traditional thanksgiving celebration among the tribes who live along the watershed of Tigua River and Tigtasang in San Fernando, Bukidnon. JOSEL LANTO, ALTERNATIVE LAW GROUPS

Pangasinan towns gear up for summer festivals

By Yolanda Bacolo-Fuentes
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

DAGUPAN CITY—TOWNS AND cities in Pangasinan have started preparations to showcase their culture and products through various festivals this summer to perk up local tourism and trade.

Gov. Victor Agbayani said the festivals were expected to bring in tourists and highlight the rich culture of Pangasinan.

On April 5-10, Binmaley, a fourth-class municipality, Central income P13 million-P25 million in several Pangasinan, will stage the "Pandan Festival" that will feature traditional practices in courtship, wedding, pregnancy, childbirth and house building.

For the first time, a "roadshow" will be held, using such "exotic" ingredients as frogs, reptiles, grasshoppers, monitor lizards and field mice, Mayor Ferdinand Calimlim said.

On April 20, Alcala, another fourth-class municipality, will try to promote Dagupan by building its own "longest Bangus (milkfish) and budeworm grills."

Bri. Mayor Manuel Collado said the town would also try to raise funds from residents now living abroad for various town projects.

"We will lay a 3-km grill that will pass through five villages and will grill 20,000 pieces of Bangus and 4,000 kilograms of pork barbecue," he said.

He said 971 three-meter grills had been "presold," for $100 each, mostly to fishfarmers.

"We are not promoting any products of the town, we only want merrymaking and more at the same time. The funds that we will raise will be dispatched with a local foundation and will be used for health, education and family food projects," the mayor said.

Dagupan will be conducting the annual Bangus festival to promote the city's bangus growing industry.

San Carlos City will host its Bangus and Sardines Festival to promote its main products.

Mayor Julius Resurreccion said that while other provinces might have surpassed the city's mango harvest, San Carlos is still known to be "mango country" whose people have mastered the art of mango production and marketing.

"Many residents are hired by orchard owners from other provinces to care of their orchards. Mangoes produced from other provinces are traded in San Carlos, either for export or for local consumption," Resurreccion said.

The city is also known for its bamboo craft.

"We have 2,000 ha. of clean and roomy where bamboo are planted to furniture. Many residents depend on the bamboo industry for livelihood," he said.

The festivals will be topped by the annual Pista y Dayat (Sea Festival) in the capital town of Lingayen from the last week of April until the first week of May.

'Lumad' join Kaamulan festival in Malaybalay

MALAYBALAY CITY—ALL ROADS here lead to the capital grounds for the annual Kaamulan Festival that started Feb. 11 and will end on March 19.

The Kaamulan, derived from a Bukidnon term meaning gathering of farmers to celebrate a bountiful harvest, has been identified by the Department of Tourism as an international attraction comparable to the Sinulog in Cebu and the Dinagyang in Iloilo.

On Saturday morning until noontime, a street dancing competition was held, but only seven of the 20 municipalities joined because of the high cost of mounting a performance.

Prizes for winners range from P50,000 to P150,000. The amounts, however, are not enough to cover expenses for costumes, props and provisions for the participants who arrived here two days earlier for rehearsals.

This year's winner was the contingent from Malitbog town where the Higaonon tribe came from.

Most of the visuals were related to the "Tampalas Ha Bulangan" or tilled property, "Bunkalon-anan," a thanksgiving celebration; "Nagbalaksi," which encompasses all farmed activities in the field, and the way of life of the indigenous peoples.

Provincial tourism officer Hilde Grace Nabalat said the new attractions included the First Mindanao Folklore Conference and the Banugara Art Exhibit featuring local art works mainly depict the environment and the indigenous peoples' lives.

"There is a need to promote our own artists who are already travelling to many countries in the world showcasing their talents as well as bringing the Bukidnon culture to many different nationalities," Nabalat said.

"That is why we have also a concert where we are featuring the 'Wanay Sunoy' for the people to really appreciate our own and very unique culture," Omar Gonial-Albania, *PDI Mindanao Bureau*

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2,500 kg of stinking fish ruin festival in Pampanga

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—BIGgest sizzling sisig plate, largest egg cake, longest longaniza and giant Christmas lantern are some of the record-setting feats in Pampanga.

But the list came with an embarrassing mark on Saturday when at least 2,500 kilograms of **winning fish** ruined the bid of aquaculture farmers to set a record for the longest line of grilled tilapia here.

As the Philippine Commodity segment of the 1.7-km skewered grill, businessmen and students participating in the festival complained of the stench as soon as the fish, packed in plastic bags, were handed to them.

"They smell bad," the women said as photographers took shots of what was supposed to be the concluding event of the Third Provincial Tilapia Congress.

Receiving similar complaints, provincial agriculturist Dante Mangiliman advised the organizers, the Philippine Tilapia Industry Association and the Alternative Communications, to stop the distribution of the fish 30 minutes after the event opened at noon.

"Bisan no (Even so) it's not fresh," **he said organizers. "What were we** going to do grilled worn-less fish,"

Mangiliman said the provincial capitol learned the event and had not bring to do with the purchase or handling of the fish that would be used in the event.

The search warrant through the capitol grounds and the balcony leading to the government offices.

Romeo Ocampo, Central Luzon director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, issued the "improper handling" of the freight.

Ice and salt, she said, were not used to keep the fish fresh.

"The fish were scaled and then **might** have caused the foul smell," she said.

Dante Tan, a fisheries technician, said the 2.5-ton cargo, kept in refrigerated vans that came from Pulilan, Bulacan, was delivered at 2 a.m. on Friday.

The cargo was taken to Candaba, Pampanga, where the fish were scaled and gutted, loaded in trucks and expedited in 3 kg bags. These were delivered just before the grilling began on Saturday.

The fish cost P105,000, Tan said.

While Ocampo and BAR technicians noted that the fish were not rotten, rendering the fish was still fine and edible, readers hastily tossed the servings.

At 2 p.m. when almost everybody had left, Philippine National Red Cross medics reported no incidence of food poisoning.

Reporters tried to get the side of PTI through its officer Nina Herrera. The hotmail and calling Herrera several times but her mobile phone was off.

He did not reply to text messages. Neither Herrera nor Art Ramos, a member of the committee, returned the reporter's call at past 3 p.m. to explain the incident.

Dagupanon said the incident did not spoil the holding of the congress, which, she added, was attended by some 3,000 tilapia growers from several regions.

She said Pampanga was shown as the venue for the congress and the grilling of the longest tilapia grill was the top performer in tilapia culture in the last six years. Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan and Tarlac produced a total of 66,262 metric tons in 2004.

The congress, according to Dagupanga, made 45 percent of the total tilapia production in the country this year. The Philippines is the fourth largest tilapia producer in the world.

VISHING Filmmakers Neil Dela Llana and Ian Gamazon pose in the backstage press room with their trophies. RAMON MUZA

2 Fil-Ams win top int'l award for indie film

From page A1

award handed out on Saturday.

Top honors went to "Brooklyn Mountain" for Best Picture and Ang Lee for Best Director.

Presented by Film Independent, the awards have become an annual tradition on the eve of the Oscars (scheduled to begin at 9:30 a.m. today, Manila time).

In keeping with its aim of honoring films and filmmakers who champion artistic independence and challenge the status quo, the Independent Spirit Awards is a relaxed, informal event held at a beachside tent in Santa Monica.

"Cavite," a film shot for 18 days in the Philippine province, tells the story of Adam, played by Antonio, who goes from his mother's funeral in Illinois to the airport upon his arrival, telling Islam that his family has been kidnapped, forcing him to obey the anonymous caller's orders.

No clue

"I had no clue that we were going to win," Dela Llana told the Inquirer. "Honestly, we didn't want to expect anything. It's an honor to be recognized at this level."

The two filmmakers were nervous Robinson Crusoe and Jay Dunham, for "Polar Bear" and "The Puffy Chair," respectively.

Filipino-American director David Magnifico was a nominee for the same award in 1996 for his film, "Too Much Sleep."

Asked what they would do with their $20,000 grant, Dela Llana replied, "We'll pay the bills and, hopefully, get another project off the ground."

The new duo sponsoring Filipino-americans have been financing their feature films using credit cards. "Cavite" is their fourth feature film. The grant is considerably more than their entire budget for "Cavite."

Relatives' places

In an earlier interview with the Inquirer, Gamazon said the film's location was chosen because "Neil's relatives live in Cavite. That made everything easier for us to shoot there."

The winners, who have been friends since high school, laughed when asked about their work.

"It was just the idea of us," Dela Llana explained. "Gamazon (pointing at himself) and me (pointing at him)." Both wrote and directed the movie, with Dominique Gonzalez credited as the other actor.

Gamazon added: "But we had the help of our location scout."

Gamazon, whose trip to Cavite was his first since he and his family left for the US, said, "Everything about the Philippines was interesting to me since I hadn't been there since I was nine. I loved it. We're both very inspired to make more films there."

The kidnapping thriller will be shown in the Philippines by Unitel Pictures on June or July, while Pathfinder Pictures also bought the worldwide rights to the film except in North America.

Hardscrabble filmmaking

A portion of a review of "Cavite" by the Los Angeles Times' Kevin Crust echoed what most critics in the US loved about the film:

"Gamazon and Dela Llana are the hardscrabble auteurs filmmaking to their advantage in carving out a smart film that explores Adam's hard-boiled cultural rebirth as he journeys through the back alleys and dusty villages in this wisely edited suspense story. The resourceful filmmakers also manage to keep what could easily have been a gimmick—a script in which 90 percent of the dialogue is phone conversations—fresh and compelling to the end."

The film has now acclaim at several US and international film festivals.

Dela Llana remarked that they would celebrate their victory with "a couple of drinks, do a little writing and dining."

Key awards

The other key awards went to Felicity Huffman (Best Actress for "Transamerica"), Philip Seymour Hoffman (Best Actor, "Capote"), Matt Dillon (Best Supporting Actor, "Crash") and Amy Adams (Best Supporting Actress, "Junebug").

The other winners:

Best screenplay: Emi Fukushima, "Capote."

Best first feature: "Crash," Paul Haggis.

Best first screenplay: Duncan Tucker, "Transamerica."

John Cassavetes award (for the best feature made for under $500,000): "Conversations."

Best cinematography: Robert Elswit, "Good Night, and Good Luck."

Best foreign film: "Paradise Now."

Best documentary: "Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room."

AMG Spirit Award: Express producers award: Caroline Baron, "Capote" and Caroline Baron, "Wassup, Wedding."

More than thirteen awards! See OSCAR and Gabriel Soriano, "Metropolitan Dreamland."

Don't judge me too harshly, says victim

From page A9

naming convicts, Nicole had decided to help out in the conviction.

"I'm used to socializing with Americans so I felt safe and comfortable with them," the daughter of a naval officer and a Philippine News employee recalled her decision.

Before the night was over on Nov. 1 last year, however, Nicole found that US Marines do dragging her into a motel van and raping her.

Although four servicemen have been charged with gang rape and are now in the custody of the US Embassy, Nicole's story has been met with general skepticism.

Speculation is rife that she is a "good time girl" out to blow the lid on the bar-to-bar camaraderie described as "unnatural acts."

Worse, what she says was pushed into the back burner by more urgent news headlines, earlier commentators and columnists went to town with stories that Nicole and her family had been paid off to settle the case.

Not a sex worker

If lawyers just too much for Nicole, who finally spoke to media "to correct impressions that I'm a sex worker who acted for the money."

She vehemently denied the claims. "I am going to pursue the case until the guilty parties are convicted," she vowed.

It was a decision she had made immediately after the rape.

"I just wanted to vomit (from a trauma)," she said, speaking in Filipino and English. "She (a) seemed like I was an easy target."

She subsequently decided to report the incident to the police.

Nicole's mother, Lorna, was only happy to have someone, Lopez said.

"Nope, happens across classes and ages." This misconception often worsens the stigma attached to rape survivors, she said, adding:

"That's why most survivors relocate after this rape."

Again, contrary to popular perception, rapes are committed under circumstances where most women would feel safe.

"Women are often raped at home, during dates, in places they would normally feel comfortable in," Lopez said.

Traumatic memory

There is also the misconception that the women's testimonies must be "consistent."

"There is such a thing as traumatic memory which is not a chronological nor logical recall," she explained.

Fortunately, aside from counseling, there are ways to help rape victims cope, said Lopez.

Together with Ose Montes's Legal Bureau, the Philippine Judicial Academy and the PCIJ Women's Desk, Lopez is conducting a sensitization program for Regional Trial Court judges and prosecutors and police officers.

"First, it is important to reassure survivors about their physical health. That's why rapes are classified as an emergency and survivors are given top priority so they can be accessed immediately for injuries, possible infections and sexually transmitted diseases."

Next, she added, "It is important to instill in the woman's mind that it was not her fault. Most survivors think that they brought about the rape because of something they did or did not do. They blame that they should get blamed for it. In fact, women are more concerned about what their families or boyfriends or husbands would say so most of them would rather not report the rape itself."

Justice must be served

Helping rape victims recover also requires that justice is served, Lopez said. But care must be taken so that the process is not traumatic, she said. In most cases, the victims feel they're on trial themselves.

Nicole said she was ready for all that. "I am only fighting for my dignity and that of my family," she said. "I just hope people would support me in the struggle. Please don't judge me too harshly. I'm only seeking justice."

TV docus prop up Palace propaganda war

Front page 1

Feb. 24, the 20th anniversary of Edsa I.

The documentary, whose production was recommended by the National Security Council, disclosed the alleged conspiracy among elements of the Right, left and the opposition to oust Mrs Arroyo.

Bonoan said the documentary was a "small effort to make people understand what's going on."

Clear and present

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said the showing of the documentary was meant "to prove to the world that the threat was clear and present."

"That was our way of showing to the people that it would be identified as a form of emergency] was really demanded by the event," Gonzalez said.

Because the documentary was based on captured documents from people linked to the alleged conspiracy, it would be identified more "to the senses," the justice secretary said.

Gonzalez acknowledged that because of the way the opposition had played up things and made negative statements about Proclamation No. 1017, "people tend to misinterpret government's action."

He cited the "misunderstanding" that happened when police swooped on the hospital where Senator Lacson confined in the early hours of Feb. 24.

Gonzalez said people thought the police were out to take Lacson in but the purpose really was to secure the area.

Almost the entire 57 "Magdalaan ng Katahimikan (1017)" on government television stations, channel 5 is among local government officials, businessmen and other sectors like schools were up, according to Bonoan.

CD copies

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunoy, in his "View from the Palace" column yesterday, said compact disc copies of the documentary were available upon request.

"For the computer users, you may wish to check out www.pcgo.ph," Bunoy said.

Asked how long the documentary would be shown on government television, Bonoan said "as long as necessary."

A military spokesperson said playing the country under a state of mind-piercy remained an option for the government.

"The tension has been greatly lessened. But if the circumstances warrant Mr. Arroyo] remains, she is ready for any contingency," said the military spokesperson, Col. Ernesto Kison.

Kison said the conspiracy to remove Mr Arroyo involved the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP), the Magdalo rebels and a third group that included businessmen, politicians and officer rogue soldiers. The Magdalo group staged a mutiny in 2003.

"Those three groups are talking to each other," he said.

'Para sa Bayan'

He identified the third group as "Para sa Bayan."

"In the diagram provided by our intelligence unit, those groups are interacting (the lowest) to bring down the Arroyo government... the CPP the Magdalo and Para sa Bayan," he

NBI says 'Wowowee' probe almost done

By Magnus C. Ordz

THE NATIONAL BUREAU of Investigation (NBI) will release either today or tomorrow the results of the probe it conducted into the "Wowowee" stampede at the Philippine Arena that left 71 people dead on Feb. 4.

"Will file affidavit of 12 NBI-CIDS affidavit and presentation, which were submitted on Friday night, we are now evaluating and wrapping up the investigation on the stampede," NBI National Capital Region (NCR) chief Noel Lasala said in an interview yesterday.

Not involved in preparations

In their affidavits, "Wowowee" host Willie Revillame and ABS-CBN top official Charo Santos-Concio told the NBI that they were not involved in preparations for the game shows's first anniversary celebration which led to a stampede.

"I have never talked of NBI-CIDS and I am not involved in the various logistics and preparation for the show," the officers said in his affidavit.

He added that his wife function in the program was "mere hosting" and his involvement was limited to the creative and aesthetic aspects of the show.

The "Wowowee" host also cite, the bad previous reports that he visited the Philippine Arena days before the stampede, but he clarified that he "was not able to acquire the actual number of people who were assembling within the premises since the arena (he) went in and visited were so few and limited."

Santos-Concio, on the other hand, said she was not involved "in any aspect of the day-to-day operations of the many entertainment programs produced, presented or being prepared by the TV Production Department and the operation of subsidiaries that form part of the Entertainment Group."

Neither did she take part in the planning of "Wowowee's" first anniversary show, her affidavit read. She added that she was only informed of the finished printed plans in a meeting.

Lasala said that affidavits were also submitted to the bureau by ABS-CBN network security head Nene Lopez and the 12 brothers' agency security guards deployed in the Philippine Arena.

Crowd was unruly

Lopez stated that despite doing everything in his capacity to prevent the tragedy from occurring, he was unable to do so because of the unruly crowd and the lack of police assistance.

The security guards, on the other hand, said that they were forced to open the door gate in the Philippine arena at 6:45 a.m. on Feb. 4 after "Wowowee" fans started pushing each other.

Lasala said ABS-CBN cooperated fully in the bureau's investigation and submitted copies of "Wowowee" episodes from Jan. 20 to Feb. 3 and case histories of the incident.

"A few seconds of the raw footage revealed that the gears were not able to control the movement crowd during the stampede," he said.

"The footage showed that there was a lack of crowd management and control to prevent the tragedy from taking place," the NBI official added.

Police ready sketches of blast suspects

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE POLICE ARE PREPARING THE sketches of at least three suspects in the two bomb explosions which rocked police offices in Pasig City on Friday morning.

"Witnesses saw three men on motorcycles going around the area minutes before the blasts. We are still waiting for the sketches (of the suspects)," Eastern Police District director Chief Supt. Chabacango Alejandrino said yesterday.

He said they were also still waiting for the Philippine National Police (PNP) Crime Laboratory to determine what kind of explosives were used.

Minor incident

PNP officials had dismissed the blasts, which happened minutes before President Macapagal-Arroyo announced the lifting of the state of emergency, as a minor incident.

Still, the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) yesterday ordered the five police districts in the metropolis to be alert in arresting police officers not only because of the explosions, but because of recent attacks on police detachments in the provinces by alleged New People's Army members.

'Powerful firecrackers'

Police did not recover any parts of a typical bomb, like wiring, batteries or shrapnel, at the crime scene, leading some officials to believe that the explosions could have been "very powerful firecrackers."

NCRPO investigation chief Senior Supt. Felipe Rojas, meanwhile, said the explosion could not have been a pillbox, as earlier suspected.

"The explosions used were a little stronger than a pillbox," Rojas said.

Police's blasts rocked the Pasig Computerized Jail beside the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) headquarters and the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex in Malate, Manila.

The compound houses the offices of the Regional Special Action Unit, the District Mobile Group, the Special Weapons and Tactics and the Traffic Enforcement Group. The blasts did little damage and injured no one.

But now for solving the suspects apparently just wanted to scare people and not harm anyone, the police have yet to determine their motives.

Theories like a possible land dispute, a row between policemen or a spat among teenagers have been put forward, but the police would not confirm anything.

METROBRIEFS

Sex boosters seized

AGENTS of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) raided last Friday several houses of models that supposedly served as love nests in itself in Manila. "These can enhance a couple's sex life," said Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD) and would cause heart attacks and other complications when taken," NBI National Capital Region (NCR) direct Noel Lasala said. NBI-NCR agents seized at least three boxes containing P90,000 worth of sex enhancers, slimming aid anti-aging capsules from three clinics at the Social Life Plaza on West Avenue, Manila. NBI-NCR agent Ray Tabino said sex enhancers such as Cialis, Viagra, Sildenafil, Extenze Gold, Viagra Jelly Drop, Black Leopard, Black Ginty, Indra Spray and Sexy Minutes were confiscated from the stores during the operation. Tabino said the store owners sold the products at P600 to P1,000 each. Charges for violation of BFAD laws and special laws on counterfeit drugs will be filed against store proprietors Amy Ong, Eric Chua, Mike Chua and Dante Ko, the NBI agent said.

Marjorie C. Ortiz

False alarm in Makati

RESIDENTS of Columbus Street in Barangay La Paz, Makati City, broke themselves in their house after hearing an explosion, plus major after someone found a grenade in a nearby area. "We were all afraid ... we panicked because we were afraid that it would explode," said Antonio Manabat, 62, one of the residents. The grenade, however, turned out to be a dud. A resident had heard the explosion on a vacant lot at the corner of Pablo Ocampo Extension and Columbus Street. After reporting it to the police, members of the Special Weapons and Tactics-Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit in the area. Police Inspector said the MK2 fragmentation grenade was now danger of exploding because of the explosive substance inside had been taken out.

Tarra F. Quismundo

Fire prevention seminars

QUEZON Serving Fire Prevention Month, firefighters in Manila have started conducting seminars and lectures on fire safety and prevention for students and residents. They have also given out reading materials that list fire safety tips. According to fire officials, electrical problems and unattended candles were the most common causes of fires in Metro Manila. Others were open flame cooking, heat combustion, bombing and flammable liquids. The Manila government has meanwhile stepped up its inspection of business establishments, particularly oil depositories and boarding houses, which are considered "fire traps."

Tina G. Santos

Quake indeed to blame

EXPERTS yesterday confirmed that the collapse of a wall around a construction site in Makati City last Friday was caused by a quake which struck Metro Manila and a nearby province two days earlier. When the wall beside the SMAC Tire Residences at Greenbelly project in Arnaiz Avenue (formerly Pasay Road) fell down, it took with three electrical posts of the Manila Electric Co., causing a power outage in the area. Engr. Ibrahim Castillo, TRAE project manager, had said in a statement that the wall collapsed because of the 5.1 magnitude quake felt last Wednesday. The quake, he added, resulted in a building safety plan which softened the soil and made the wall collapse. His finding was confirmed by structural and geotechnical consultants of the SMAC project who inspected the area. The consultants, meanwhile, said that the collapse "did not in any way affect the structural integrity" of the 40-floor Laguna Tower, one of SMAC's three towers, which is now the site where the incident happened.

Tarra F. Quismundo

Torres, 73

APOLONIA A. Torres died at Mount 4 of the age of 73. She is survived by her children Emiliano, Estrambo, Edna, Fides, Florina, Jose, Electra and Filmea. Her body lies in their residence at 3208 Mahatao Street, Sto. Cristo in Tondo, Manila and will be transferred to Barangay Sangat, Lemery in Occidental Mindoro on May 10. Interment will be announced later.

Training seminars

THE DE LA SALLE College of Saint Benilde, through the School of Deaf Education and Applied Studies and the Food Secondary Education Network International, will hold a training exchange next June-March 6-8. Experts from the New York-based National Technical Institute for the Deaf of the Rochester Institute of Technology will conduct a series of training seminars for deaf students and parents, counseling professionals, and teachers of students with the deaf. Participation is free seminars is by invitation only. For inquiries, please call SDE-7101 local 2328 or e-mail celia.tan@dlsu.edu.ph.

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TUP student dies of hazing injuries

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By Tarra R. Quismundo

THE MAKATI POLICE HAVE TAKEN INTO custody a student of the Technological University of the Philippines (TUP) for his possible involvement in the death of another student allegedly due to hazing.

Clark Aaron Silverio, 18, a second year mechanical engineering student of TUP Manila, was declared dead on arrival at the Manila Southwestern Hospital in Pasay City last Friday afternoon. An initial police report said that he had died of hematoma and severe contusions, mainly on his thighs.

Silverio had been brought to the hospital by four teenagers who said that they had found him unconscious, possibly drunk, and lying on the street. One of those who had taken him to the hospital, Edmar Ogano, another TUP student, was picked up by the police after Silverio died.

Investigators showed that the two were among 20 teenagers who went to a warehouse on Guatemala Street in Barangay San Isidro, Makati on Friday morning. The warehouse caretaker, a certain Alma, told the police that it was the fourth time in several weeks that a group of boys and girls had gone there to hold initiation rites.

She told the police that she saw nine members of the group, one of whom she identified as Ogano, carrying planks of wood. When Heralded shouting, I saw that a group of teens were [hitting] others. I heard [some people] shouting, moaning, screaming and crying," Alma said in her statement to the police.

LIB ANDREA Barros shows the winning form that helped her land the Binibining Pilipinas-Universe 2006 title.

Beauty pageant winners picked

By Aveen Rabino

CROWD FAVORITES RACKED UP THE THREE major titles at the 2006 Binibining Pilipinas pageant held last Saturday at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, Quezon City.

The spectators erupted in screams as Deville Lou Valmonte, 24, received the Binibining Pilipinas-International title from 2005 title holder International Precious Lara Quigaman.

Just minutes later, another crowned pleaser was crowned Binibining Pilipinas-World by previous title holder, Carlene Aguilar. She was also proclaimed first in Long Gown.

The Binibining Pilipinas-Universe title, on the other hand, went to Liz Andrea Ramos. The 23-year-old political science graduate of the University of the Philippines also bagged numerous awards—Miss Photogenic, Best in Swimwear, Miss Philippine Airlines and Most and Talk-Star.

First runner-up Rosalyn Santiago, 25, stole or entered the scene when she was proclaimed Voters' Choice for garnering the most number of votes cast through text.

Jeanine Bernadette Bello, 22, completed the lineup as second runner-up. Twenty-four hopefuls competed in this year's competition.

Tough, sleek and fast.
Canon

COCA-COLA'S Ali Peek makes a one-handed dive off Air21's Yeng de Guzman.

SPORTS

E-mail: sr_sports@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres

Coke Tigers' snarl back in demolition of Express

By Jane Navarro

COCA-COLA HAS FOUND THE CHEMISTRY the Tigers missed in the last two conferences.

Playing like a well-oiled machine, the Tigers demolished the 102-71 Express, 104-83, in Game 1 of their Governor's Cup campaign on a high note last night at the Araneta Coliseum.

Billy Mamaril hit a pair of big [illegible] while Johnny Abarrientos commanded his deadly form to key the Tigers' breakaway in a span bridging the third and fourth periods.

But it was Ali Peek and John Arigo who held the Tigers together with their excellent plays.

"I'm not talking about the way they scored but on how they created opportunities for their teammates," said Coca-Cola coach Binky Favis. "Such is the essence of basketball.

WNC, Perpetual forge showdown for students cage title

LEGAZPI CITY—JERIT MICRO COLLEGE brought down National University, 77-61, late Saturday to arrange a showdown with defending champion University of Perpetual Help (NU) System for the 68th National Students Basketball Championship at the Albay Astrodome here.

The Altas took the other finals berth following a 76-63 thumping of Angeles University Foundation, 75-61, in a game marred by highly physical plays and a near walkout by the Great Danes.

Completing the new and shocking showdown between the WNC Mustangs, last year's University Games champions, dominated the third quarter to build a 67-43 lead.

Jerid Han Del Mundo starred for the Mustangs in that decisive stretch, scoring 11 of his 20 points.

Where the Bulldogs double-teamed Chris Aringo Wagwag, who scored 28 of his 28 points, from the three-point range, and Mustang scoring picked up, they dared to outrun the wire—and notice WNC's first finals appearance in eight years.

The Mustangs actually had already beaten the Altas in the eliminations, 68-62.

"Maybe the boys wanted to prove something after winning the University Games last year," said WNC coach Elvis Alinsunurin.

The Mustangs ended the final game on the expense of St. Francis of Assisi College.

ALIP lost Allen Hilotan, who was banished from the court for attempting to punch Perpetual's Jerrid Mendoza with 7:22 left in the second quarter. The referees' decision, however, did not sit well with ALIP manager Nida Ramos, who ordered her players to walk out. In the end, though, the team was persuaded to remain play.

Meanwhile, Perpetual's provincial board member Ralph Nadres and Mayor Bernal sent messages of condolences to ISAP secretary general Esteban Lim, whose father died last Thursday after a lingering illness.

Asistio rules Samsung grand finals by three

LIPA CITY—ROMULTE ASISTIO CLOSED OUT with an even-par 72 despite a bogey-bogey finish yesterday to take the Samsung Amateur Golf Tour grand finals by three shots at the Suntrust Point Golf and Country Club here.

Asistio, who had a three-stroke lead over Jeffrey Lumbao on the golf-mauge Mount Malarayat course, was tied with Jillan and one up on Bryan Sumagaysay at the start of the round, teamed up with a 2-PO total. Jillan was second at 209.

Sumagaysay, the Subway leader in this event sponsored by Samsung and featured the championship division winners of the various legs, recovered from a disastrous start and shot 71 to 74 and 3000 for third place.

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Asistio, who had a 71 during the first round, was

Zo slam downs Hawks

Kobe's 40, Kidd's triple double power Lakers, Nets

MIAMI—ALONZO MOURNING slammed the game-winning dunk with 1.8 seconds remaining to cap a Miami Heat rally for an eighth straight victory, a 95-93 home decision over the Atlanta Hawks on Saturday.

Mourning's dunk gave the Heat its first lead of the game as Miami recovered from a 17-point deficit despite the absence of guard Dwyane Wade, who watched the game from the bench due to a toe injury.

It made stallion worst for the hosts, Shaquille O'Neal fouled out with 2:45 left for Miami, leaving the Heat without their top interior player.

"We have to win some games on nights when maybe you don't have a lot of things going for you," Heat coach Pat Riley said.

In East Rutherford, Jason Kidd scored 14 points and had 15 rebounds and 15 assists for a triple double as New Jersey beat Toronto, 109-100, in overtime.

Vince Carter had 31 points and Richard Jefferson added 30 for the Nets.

At Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant scored 40 points and had plenty of help from his teammates as the Lakers defeated Detroit, 105-94.

One night after becoming the youngest player in the NBA to score 16,000 points, Bryant reached the 40-point mark for the 13th time this season.

In San Antonio, Tim Duncan scored 22 points as the Spurs beat the Portland Trail Blazers, 103-83.

In Milwaukee, Andrei Kirilenko scored 30 points and had 11 rebounds as the Utah Jazz defeated the Bucks, 108-98.

(Box scores, page A18)

HOLDING: Big Zo is dunk

Coke Tigers' snarl back in rout of Express

From page A18

They [Nash and Arigo] attacked the defense and got everybody in the game involved."

Arigo tossed in 20 points and grabbed nine rebounds while Nash had 20 points and 11 rebounds. Mornard also finished in double-double figures with 14 points and 10 rebounds. Nicklas Dewalt Ekstrand and Dale Kingson added 12 and 9 points, respectively.

In the second game, Mo Bekaou showed his former team what it was missing, tying a career-high of 30 points to lead Alaska-Co a 105-90 victory over Ind. Mpaul.

Bekaou, traded during the conference break for Brandon Cobbin, made 11 of his 14 attempts from the field in 35 minutes en route to his total, which tied a personal best he scored as a San Miguel standout.

Cobbin scored an uncontested in his Brewster debut, finishing with just three points in 20 minutes, taking just four attempts from the field and making one.

Richard followed up his three point play off Mark Telan with a 21 footer as the Tigers took a 75-70 edge while holding the Express scoreless in the closing minutes of the third.

A long jumper by Alaska-Aviation gave the Tigers an 81-72 spread before Ruff Harris, Peds and Arigo put the outcome beyond doubt with an assortment of shots inside the lane.

THE SCORE
Final Score
COLLEGE FBS: Arigo 32, Peds 21, Mornard 14, Mercer 12, Harris 10, Nash 8, Nelson 5, Alaska-Aviation 3, Wainright 2, Mercer 0.
ANET 84—Mpaul 28, De Gracia 15, Chaney 15, Nash 13, De Gracia III 13, Dias 4, Gonzalez 2, Mercer 2, Cruz 1, Tan 1, Castro 0.
Alaska 105—Bekaou 30, Mercer 20, Cruz 14, Nelson 13, Mercer 11, Nash 9, Vincent, Augustin 6, Nelson 4, Dept 3, Lopez 1.
SAN MIGUEL 89—Vargas 21, Ambrosio 19, Ambrosio 12, Garcia 10, Calaguio 10, Peter 6, Gatus 3, Gonzales 2, Arcay 2, Mercer 0.
Statistics: 25-58, 43-62, 5-11, 32-40.

Woods seizes Doral lead

DORAL—THE SHOWDOWN TURNED INTO A stroll as Tiger Saturday afternoon at Doral course. Tiger Woods came through with a video shot into the 18th green and cruised under to a 4-stroke lead.

Woods recovered from a double bogey to surge into the lead, then carved a shot through the trees on the final hole and escaped with a 6-under 66 that left two-shot clear of Daniel Chopra and Rich Beem heading into the final round of the Ford Championship at Doral.

Woods charged with three straight birdies on the back nine and finished at 17-under 199.

Phil Mickelson slowly lost ground on the back nine before taking off having gone into the water on the 18th. He made a 72 to finish in a tie for prize, but still secured top four shots behind.

The fans cuts got their money's worth, esp mum in particular. He was hit by Mickelson's ri mum. It arced on the 16th hole, and a birdie his words. Mickelson went to check on him, and pulled two $100 bills from his bag to pay for the mouth.

"It wasn't a Rolex," Mickelson said. AP

THE SHOWDOWN: Duties as Phil Mickelson (left) and Tiger Woods go separate ways after the third round.

Dubai Open: Nadal stuns Federer

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES—FIFTH-seeded, sleeping away the second tournament in four months, beat top-seeded Roger Federer, 2-6, 6-4, 6-4, in the final of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championship.

Nadal, ranked world number two, broke Federer's serve in the 10th game of the second set to make it 6-4 and then broke again in the first game of the third set to take a 2-1 lead. He held on to win the match after Federer double-faulted on match point.

"I think it's a fantastic victory. I've had a lot of ups and downs this year — the Australian and Doha Opens. "

Bolivar, Yambao unchallenged

LUCENA CITY—Alquin Bolivar and Jhoffy Yambao opened Lucena City Tennis Association's bid for maintenance yesterday in topping the 21K elimination race of the 26th National Milo Marathon that wound up at the Penny Park here.

Bolivar, a criminology student of De La Salle-Dasmariñas in Cavite, clocked one hour, 13 minutes and 42 seconds to shave his first Milo big title.

The 20-year old Bolivar, who topped the 10-miler in Lipa City last year, said he was set to join the 21K last season but couldn't find a slot.

"Now I'm looking forward to the 42K," he said.

Bolivar, Mambaonod the rest of the top three finishers in the event and women's racer advanced to the 42K finals in Metro Manila on Sun. 19.

Jhoffy Alejandrino was second (1:13:59) and Ferdinand Bacalangco third (1:17:02) among men.

Yambao, who dominated the distaff side in 1:34:10, said she couldn't wait for the Manila qualifying leg because she needed money more for her graduation expenses.

Bolivar and Yambao, a senior sophomore student at the University of Santo Tomas, pocketed P15,000 each for their victories yesterday.

The 42K elimination race in Metro Manila on July 16 offers a bigger champion's purse of P50,000.

Finishing nine seconds in the women's race was veteran Rita Paz, with 19-year-old Gracyn Imbesky, an education student of De La Salle-Dasmariñas salvaging third.

The top three 16 finishers were Jerome Bolado (1:14:11), Jessie Bienvenu (1:15:12) and Angel Adelfuerte (1:17:50) in the men's race and Bernadette Bilag (one (1:18:50), Jean-ete Banwate (1:22:26) and Lydia Dingana (1:23:31) in the distaff race.

John Serrano and Adelaide Ramos were the 16 finishers were in the 6-9 age group and Mark Anthony Abenoza and Sarah Jane Bonilla duplicated the feat in the 10-12 category. The marathon is held in partnership with Bayview Park Hotel-Manila, Adidas, Coke Pacific and Powerbar.

VICTORS: Alquin Bolivar (third from left) and LCA Tambacan's flanked by (from left) Nike Sports Events executive Pat Gee-ong, Nike Cycle Planning manager Rhyanne Manzanilla, regional sales manager Manny Calalangdo and area sales executive Carlo Lozada.

SPORTSWATCH

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ENTERTAINMENT

Fil-Am Oscar bet

ABOVE, Pia Clemente with Raja Laurel (left) and David Tejao, and the three gowns. At left, what she decided to wear.

Pia's choice

PIA CLEMENTE, THE first Filipino-American woman to be nominated for an Oscar, will be wearing to the Academy Awards show today a (champagne-colored) sheath inspired gown created by Filipino designers.

David Tejao and Raja Laurel fashioned three gowns for Clemente in five days, with 20 workers.

Apart from the one that she picked, the two others are: a V-neck ballon in burnt orange, and a spaghetti-strapped number in pink and rhinestone.

Pia's choice sports a peacock- (painted) tribal pattern.

The awards show will be telecast live on ABS-CBN today starting at 9 a.m.

Pia, as producer, and writer-director Jun Robles have been nominated in the Best Short Film, Live Action category for "One Time in Up," a comedy featuring Kevin Pollack.

The petite (5'1") filmmaker said she wanted a gown that was "classy but sexy and comfortable at the same time."

INSIDE

- Awards night! /A2-3
- Fun facts about the Oscars /A2-3
- Who's leading the Best Actor race? /A2-3
- Which films got the most nods? /A2-3
- And oh, those after-parties! /A2-3

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Oscars fun facts, etc.

HOLLYWOOD—FOLLOWING IS A collection of fun facts about the Academy Awards, the 78th edition of which will be held at Hollywood's Kodak Theatre on Sunday (Monday in Manila):

■Even if this year's front-runner "Brokeback Mountain" wins all eight of the Oscars for which it is nominated, its achievements would fall far short of the record of the 11 statuettes each claimed by "Ben-Hur" (a run of 12 nominations), 1997's "Titanic" (out of 14), and 2003's "The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" (out of 11).

■Actress Luminthon George Clooney did not become the first person to Oscar's history to be nominated as Best Director and to an acting category for different films in the same year.

■If 30-year-old Australian Heath Ledger wins Best Actor, he would become the youngest-ever recipient, displacing the current record-holder Adrien Brody who was 29 when he won in 2003 for "The Pianist."

■If Britain's Keira Knightley, 20, wins Best Actress for "Pride and Prejudice," she would become the youngest ever person to win that award.

■The oldest living Academy winner was Jessica Tandy, for "Driving Miss Daisy" in 1989, when she was 80.

■This year marks the first time in 25 years that the five Best Picture nominees are a perfect match with the Best Director shortlist. The last time was in 1981.

■Legendary US movie composer John Williams is up for one best Original Score—one for "Memoirs of a Geisha" and the other for "Munich," making him the most-nominated musician/composer in history with 43 nods.

■Television-born director Ang Lee, 51, whose "Brokeback Mountain" leads this year's nominations, received his first nod for 2000's "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon," which was nominated for 10 Oscars including Director and Best Picture. "Crouching Tiger" eventually took home four awards, for Art Direction, Cinematography, Foreign Language Film and Music.

■A total of 14 of this year's nominees are first-time Academy Award nominees, while six have previously been on the shortlist for one of today's eight honors.

■Of those six, four ultimately were: William Hurt for playing a gay leading character in "Kiss Of the Spider Woman" (1985), Jodi Foster for Best Supporting Actress in 1988's "Shadowlands" in Love, "Charlize Theron for Best Actress in "Monster" (2003) and Frances McDormand for Best Actress in "Fargo" (1996).

■This year marks the first time since the Best actor/actress Oscars category was introduced in 2002 that none of the nominees were produced primarily by computer-generated images. The last time this split for the award this year are: "Howl's Moving Castle" by Hayao Miyazaki, "Tim Burton's Corpse Bride" and "Hide Hark and Clever Boy's "Wallace and Gromit in the Curse of the Were-Rabbit."

■Animation pioneer Walt Disney holds two dozen awards. He won more Oscars than any other person (26 statuettes) and with 59 Oscar nods, he remains the wife of the most nominated person in history.

■Actresses Meryl Streep and Katharine Hepburn are the most nominated actors in Oscars history with 13 nods apiece.

■The person to win the most Oscars for acting was Katharine Hepburn again, with four awards for leading actress.

■In the first foreign Language Film category, France holds the record for the most nominations (14, including this year's "Joyeux Noel"), while Italy holds the record for the most wins with 10 statuettes to its credit. AFP

And oh, those after-parties!

HOLLYWOOD—TELEVISION'S NEWS 602 looking forward to the dazzling after-parties that dwarf the Oscars' glamour.

Missing an invitation to the must-attend bashes, such as the annual parties thrown by Vanity Fair magazine and superstar Elton John, is almost as hard as rekindling one of the Oscars.

"Everybody who's anyone wants to go party," said Beth Rosinski of Vanity Fair. The other "must-do" event is John's 4000 Foundation party, which features an early dinner starting which grows to the Oscars broadcast, followed by a no-holds-barred party.

But the main event lies around the official Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Governor's Ball, thrown for the 1,20 odd nominees and the other guests immediately after the ceremony.

The $750-per-head do features cuisine by chef to the stars Wolfgang Puck. AFP

Hoffman tops Best Actor list

LOS ANGELES—THERE LICENSES IN the entertainment and media are up against a gutsy and a gay cowboy for the Best Actor Academy Award.

"Capote" star Philip Seymour Hoffman is the front-runner for his remarkable embodiment of Truman Capote, appearing the author's effete egotism and the dark conflicts that crippled him emotionally after writing the true-crime novel "In Cold Blood."

Hoffman's latest blockbuster Phoenix ("Walk the Line"), David Strathairn ("Good Night, and Good Luck"), Terrence Howard ("Hustle & Flow") and Heath Ledger ("Brokeback Mountain").

In a year of tough competition in the acting categories, Hoffman looks like the obvious choice to at least the Golden Globe for Best Actor in a Drama and the Academy honors at the Screen Actors Guild awards.

If Capote, who died in 1984, were around today, Hoffman said, "He would probably be amused because that was his life—but he would also be happy that seventeen was being discovered on him again." David Germain, AP

Which film got the most nods?

LOS ANGELES—HERE ARE THE principal feature films vying to the 78th annual Academy awards, and their nominations.

"Brokeback Mountain," 8: Best Picture; Actor, Heath Ledger; Supporting Actor, Jake Gyllenhaal; Supporting Actress, Michelle Williams; Director, Ang Lee; Cinematography; Original Score; Adapted Screenplay.

"Crash," 6: Best Picture; Supporting Actor, Matt Dillon; Director, Paul Haggis; Film Editing; Original Song; Original Screenplay.

"Good Night, and Good Luck," 6: Best Picture; Actor, David Strathairn; Director, George Clooney; Cinematography; Art Direction; Original Screenplay.

"Memoirs of a Geisha," 6: Best Actress, Zhang Ziyi; Cinematography; Costume Design; Original Score; Sound Editing; Sound Mixing.

"Capote," 5: Best Picture; Actor, Philip Seymour Hoffman; Supporting actress, Catherine Keener; Director, Bennett Miller; Adapted Screenplay.

"Munich," 5: Best Picture; Director, Steven Spielberg; Film Editing; Original Score; Adapted Screenplay.

"Walk the Line," 3: Best Actor, Joaquin Phoenix; Best Actress, Reese Witherspoon; Costume Design; Film Editing; Sound Mixing.

"Pride and Prejudice," 4: Best Actress, Keira Knightley; Art Direction; Costume Design; Original Score.

"The Constant Gardener," 4: Best Supporting Actress, Rachel Weisz; Film Editing; Original Score; Adapted Screenplay.

"King Kong," 3: Best Art Direction; Sound Editing; Sound Mixing; Visual Effects.

"The Chronicles of Narnia," "Cinderella Man" and "Mrs of the Worlds," 3 each. AFP

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	4 CAPOTE	5 PRIDE & PREJUDICE	6 SYRIANA	7 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2			
GB1	1 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA	2 FEARLESS					
GB3	1? HOSTEL	2? FEARLESS					
	3 CAPOTE	4 PRIDE & PREJUDICE	5 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA				
ATC	1? FEARLESS	2 PRIDE & PREJUDICE					
	3 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA	4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2	5 FINAL DESTINATION 3				
ACC	1 FEARLESS	2 WALK THE LINE	3 PRIMO	4 CLOSE TO YOU			
M2	1 FEARLESS	2 PRIDE & PREJUDICE					
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Class rather than crass in new sexy movies

KATRINA Halili, "Starstruck" finalist: 'What's going on?'

SOME WEEKS AGO, FORMER CHILD STAR Camille Prats surprised her fans by coming out in her first sexy pictorial. Later, "Starstruck" finalist Katrina Halili also went the sexy pictorial route, and is now being built up as a sexpot by Regal Films.

What's going on here? In the past, most sexy actresses didn't come from the ranks of former child stars and talent search finalists. They were "discovered" in girlie clubs, and performed accordingly.

In fact, they were as honest—and despicably inept—on the movie screen that the only thing some eventually developed in real life was a bad attitude. And sexy flicks no longer click with viewers today.

By the way, this is also true internationally, where the current hits are hardly pictures, action

CLASS, A2-4

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

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ERMITA

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2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 HOSTEL
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4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
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6 MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA/
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7 BASAAN III FRANCISO?

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4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
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8 HOSTEL
Sneak Preview

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4 FEARLESS

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adventure movies, animated features, inspiring dramas and zany comedies.

So, why are Camille and Kate's handlers spiking their image in a clichéd sexy performance? It must be because they feel that hard viewers can still get conned by sore bodies—as long as they aren't "dusky."

The formula worked years ago, when the "dusky" films of Dina Bonnevie and Amanda de Bossi were the sexy ones. But, will it click with viewers today? That would depend a lot on the quality of the launching projects' swiping and direction.

What's clear is that racy sex flicks starring bodies rather than actresses have definitely had their day. So, we trust that new sexy movies go for class rather than crass.

Feedback

FROM Anna T. Ignacio of Makati City: "I was listening to the radio the other day, and I was shocked to hear the announcers cracking sexy jokes that were really below the belt. This should be a no-no in radio, because it's a medium that's open to everybody within earshot, including many children.

"Managers of radio stations should monitor their announcers' more closely to make sure that young listeners' vulnerable sensibilities are respected. Advocates, in their desire to be humorous, announcers forget that are exposing young listeners to dirtiness in adult.

"Even with adults, there are some jokes or remarks that are too risqué for the broadcast medium, especially during the daytime, as discretion is also required."

'16 Blocks'

BRUCE Willis unfolds the new cop drama, "16 blocks," which opens in Manila later this month. He plays a veteran detective who unsuccessfully struggle with depression, until he is assigned to escort a petty criminal (Mos Def) 16 blocks from lockup to the courthouse to testify before a grand jury.

He sees the criminal's life several times.

In truth, however, it's Mos Def's character who outwits the cop's physical and emotional well being. — Richard Bonnet Ebora

'Live to Worship'

PRAISE Inc. has come out with "Live to Worship," a 20-track, double-CD compilation of Christian Contemporary Music, available at House of Praise outlets.

Tunes include Reuben Morgan's "World Through Your Eyes," "Rain Down" by Delirious, Matt Redman's "Better Auras You," Hip Hughes' "You," and The Newsboys' "Forever (My Heart's Desire)."

Bibi Locsin in "Nasaan si Pwesto?"-Pan.

Dazed, glazed

By Oliver M. Palomboy
Contributor

"NASAAN SI PWESTO?" BUMS WITH ENERgy and experimentation when it comes to visuals, but if you're expecting something really substantial or a story with lasting impact, you're better off watching something else. The comedy that centers on the ill-fated zombie Pwesto (Ogie Quizon) and his former band mates Boy Pinoko Combo and Sonny (Dino Blanco), boasts a cast that includes Christopher de Leon, Bic Lorzin, Ricky Davao and Rita delli. There's an obvious collective will to throw in that stellar gathering, but it may as well have been a prolonged local TV sitcom.

When the second title character croaks barely 20 minutes into the movie, Boy and Sonny decide to steal Pwesto' would-be-any gifts hidden in his home, right under the noses of his bickering brother and sister (Davao and delli). Boy and Sonny try to pull off a "Weekend at Bernie's" conceit, making Pwesto appear alive for high-fives, or setup-to-every-one-else. And as more of them are used to using the guy dazed or unconscious, they're all hooked into believing just that.

Stretched

That premise is somewhat meik—and a bit after—the climax. What pops out in a collage of new parodies from Dr. Love as a drug dealer who occasionally gets high and shouts to electronics in a convenience store; and from the Locsin, who plays a vicious, platinum blonde-wigged pimp. It's great seeing these do new stuff for a change, and as cutie-bigger characters that are ultimately unexpensive plot devices, they're quite good.

What the story lacks in heart is made up for in bulk and whistles. The movie sports some snazzy animation, trippy digital effects, and rock video montage-style. The directorial inventiveness, tabby thereunder, shows potential to be really good; he has an eye for cool-then imagery and composition. The story could have been tweaked to be more involving and believable, though. It wasn't established that Pwesto' boss-bar chick, musical, grooved with that an assortment of local characters on go-somewhere in it for a long time.

Blast

"Nasaan si Pwesto?" doesn't bother with back stories or steps for brief glimpses of the very dead Pwesto and his siblings' happy moments together. But despite lacking depth, the oddball characters of Locsin and De Leon are fun because they're novel—harshly unrestrained. Rock musician Earl Sixty's ghost has memorable wits as a manic-melophile-wooer dude is another funny if quick the same can be said about Blanco's tooh-as-obsessed geek sidekick. But it's pretty clear that the cast had a blast working on the film, just as it's obvious that the humor is mostly limited-role.

Roundup

'Legal Forum' now on QTV

STARTING today, "Legal Forum," hosted by lawyer Joji Alonzo, will be telecast from its new home, 2 to 3 p.m., Mondays through Fridays, 6:45-7 a.m.

Featured segments will continue to tackle true-legal issues per day. Alonzo, also known as Atty. Joji, says she hopes public support for the program, continues to educate Filipinos about their rights and responsibilities, lest there do-hard of the latest changes in the law and are there against potential abuses. "Legal Forum" first aired on Nov. 15, 1992.

Asked why she has not expanded the show to a full hour, Alonzo said the episodic format is particularly "training a low watching."

She believes "Legal Forum" has survived because the people are "hungry for knowledge about the law"—since it affects every person's life, from birth to death, and not everyone can pay for precious legal advice.

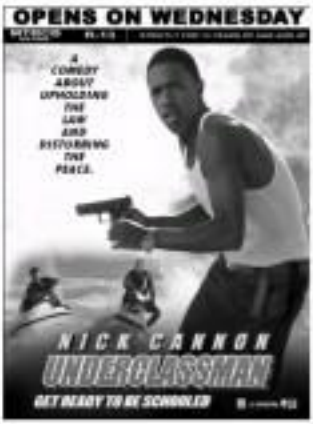
Latest from Brad

LOS ANGELES (UI)—Brad Pitt will produce and possibly star in a film of Mary Doria Russell's science fiction novel "The Sparrow," about a Jesuit priest visiting an alien culture on another planet, Variety reported Friday.

Warner Brothers now bought the film rights to the book from Universal, putting production in the hands of Pitt's Plan B and industry heavyweight.

Pitt, 47, created Plan B together with his then-wife actress Jennifer Aniston, who gave up her ownership in the company after their 2005 divorce.

AFP



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DNAP, rap duo Barbarossa Al Isorena (Eliza Nonie, left, and Taylor Wales on his last night on the show.

Sway's okay

By Kathryn Fatima Reyes

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

But he'd have wanted to stay on 'Idol' longer

THE DAY AFTER PILAM JULIE "DNAP" PUNTA got voted out of "American Idol," known to Entertainment hooked up with him by phone.

The voice on the other end of the line was that of a very positive and a very graceful "sleepers."

"I'm very happy to make you all proud. It's just too bad I couldn't stay longer so I can make you proudest," Sway said by way of thanking all Filipinos for their support.

Despite getting eliminated on Thursday (Friday in Manila), Sway said, he felt lucky that he got to be a part of this year's "American Idol." For him, it's reality talent search show in the United States right now.

Doors opened

"When I joined, I had nothing to lose and everything to gain," said the 28-year-old who runs Barrio Boiz in the Philippines and migrated to the US in 1989. "I may be the end of the road for me on 'Idol' but it definitely opened a few more windows for me—doors, even."

He will surely miss "school," though, Sway said, referring to the stressful day-to-day extravaganza on AI. And certainly, he will miss his "School Idol buddies" fellow 6 contestants Elliott Yamin and Taylor Hicks, with whom he said he intends to keep in touch.

Sway, who noted that choosing the right song to do on the show was practically to his pursuit as having talent, sang Stevie Wonder's "Overjoyed" during the main performance night on Wednesday. He failed to impress the judges.

Judge Simon Cowell warned him that if he carried on that way, he wouldn't make it to the grand finals. Indeed, Sway got the second lowest number of votes that night.

"I chose that song because it's something that people can relate to," he explained, "But when you pick a song, you have to own it, sell it, be comfortable with it. I think that was lacking in my performance that week."

Last week, the first Filipino male on AI was one of the recipients of Ryan's trademark compliments. "He got a hot one tonight!" The same judge reportedly disliked when he saw Sway in the bottom three.

About talent

Being the only Asian in the contest this season, Sway said it was proud enough of Diana Ross, one that Jasmine Trias made it big on AI two years ago.

"If you're talented, you're talented," Sway insisted. "It's not about color or race."

While on the subject, we asked if in any fashion that his fellow-male contestants were rather cool between breaking. Sway's confidence ey: "I believe I made it in the top 10 because I had something to offer. Everyone [in the contest] is unique in their own way."

Asked how Filipino he has remained, Sway said, "Oh, I'm very Filipino!" He speaks Tagalog, he was proud to say, "Pare-boni lang." Given the chance, he said, he would definitely like to do a movie career in the Philippines.

Still close he has, in fact, gained quite a local following since making it big on AI, he exclaimed, "Really? Wow! That's great!"

"Now that you've told me, I just might go back there soon to meet all of them."

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DID YOU KNOW...

"American Idol" judge Paula Abdul was allowed to board a plane at the Las Vegas airport without passing through a security checkpoint, prompting all passengers and baggage to be screened when they landed in California, officials said Friday.

A spokesperson for AbCan ran International Airport said the airport was not involved in reports that an employee had just helped the pop star avoid a swarm of fans.

AP

MONDAY, MARCH 6, 2006 PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER B1

BUSINESS

PC BUYER'S GUIDE
The No.1 Computer Magazine

Unpaid taxes delay sale of RPN-9

Deferment also affects privatization of IBC-13

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE PRIVATIZATION of RPN-9 will not push through as scheduled because the unpaid taxes of the television station still has to settle back taxes with the Bureau of Internal Revenue and address issues concerning its workforce.

Finance Undersecretary Gabriel Singson Jr., who heads the privatization program, said the financial adviser on the sale of RPN-9 recommended that the government postpone the sale until after the TV station's obligations are settled.

"It looks like it will not happen this quarter. There seems need to be resolved first before we bid it out," Singson told reporters.

He said that from the original plan of selling RPN-9 within the first quarter of the year, the privatization would have to be moved to an indefinite date. But he said the government was hoping the sale could still be undertaken before the year ends.

Singson said that a committee headed by officials of the Privatization Council has already privatization adviser CLSA Philippine Capital Inc. said the government might not find a good deal with any potential investor if RPN-9 remained burdened with unpaid taxes.

CLSA added that RPN-9 should have a definite plan as to what should be done with its employees when the privatization push through. This would unveil possible labor issues that might discourage potential investors. Singson quoted the financial advisers as saying.

RPN-9 also has debts with the Privatization Management Office that it has to settle before the government could begin efforts to privatize the television firm, Singson said. He did not disclose how much the television station owed, but said advances were made to partially finance its operating requirements.

Singson would also not provide details of the unpaid taxes of RPN-9, but said the government intended to settle all liabilities of the broadcasting firm before it would start the search for bidders.

The postponement of the sale of RPN-9 means the plan to privatize...

Nestle seeks gov't help vs counterfeiting

By Ronnel W. Domingo

NESTLE PHILIPPINES INC. HAS SOUGHT THE help of the government in its efforts to curb the proliferation of counterfeit products using its brands.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer C. Hernandez said Nestlé officials have complained of fairly brand-resistant chocolate-based products were being imported and sold using the brands of similar Nestlé products.

"The company has formed a legal team to address this matter," Hernandez said. "The DTI is ready to help following its mandate to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices."

The official said Nestlé officials were concerned about the fake products coming into their market thus protecting its brands like Milo chocolate drink, Nescafé instant coffee, Coffee-mate coffee creamer and Bear Brand milk.

"The counterfeit products, which were de-

Profit-taking seen

STOCK EXCHANGE INDEX WEEK After last week's rally, ABS Capital Securities said in a weekly report.

It said in a note to clients that the market remained bullish in the medium to long term, but while the state of emergency had been lifted, the market still has to contend with the ongoing terrorism threat, political instability.

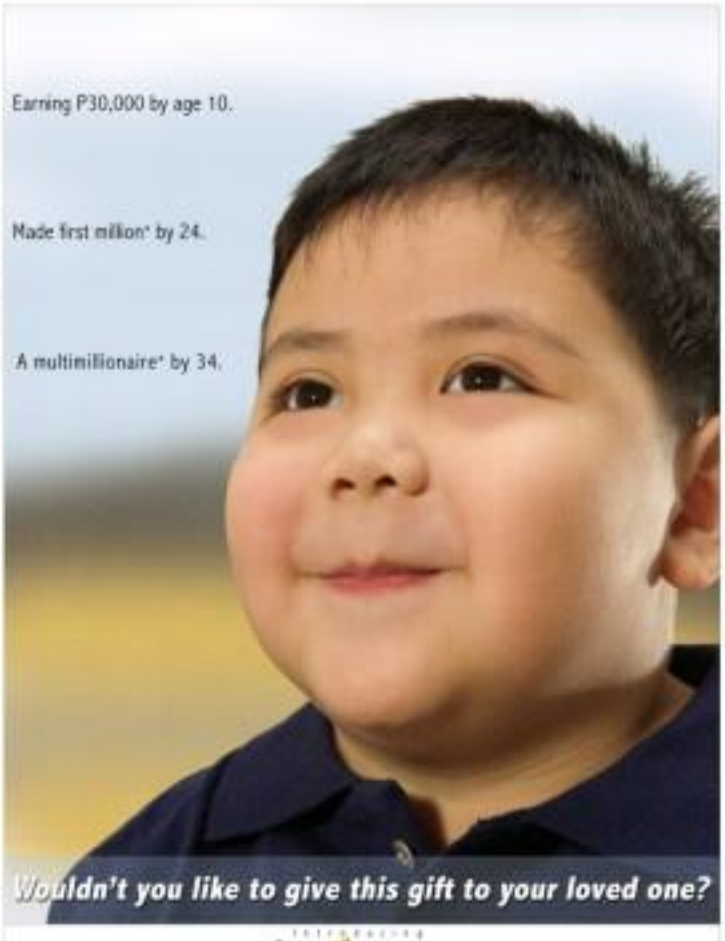
It added that investors would keep a close watch on the release of January fiscal data this week.

"There is [also] some little market-moving corporate news, with most of the major companies already finished reporting their 2005 results. One important date this week that could be a potential catalyst is the January fiscal deficit report," ABS Capital wrote.

Last week's gains were led by "first-liners" as investors took an opportunity to buy into blue chips, which continued to thrive through political turmoil, given their industry dominance.

Total volume for the week stood at P1.87.5bn by the companies (Ayala Corp. and Ayala Land Inc.) and the SM Group (SM, Banco De Oro) companies that are rated A with equity (PCIB's announcement of record earnings also drove up market sentiment last week.

PCIB reported that earnings in 2005 rose to a record P34.17 billion. ABS Capital noted that core earnings were driven by the 15 percent



P11B worth of projects get incentives

By Rainer M. Dumlao

INVESTMENTS APPROVED BY Department of Trade and Industry soar by 2.3 percent in the first two months of 2006 to P11 billion.

Trade officials said the improvement, which was relatively unexpected at the start of the year, was due mainly to capital inflows from Chinese and American firms.

Trade Undersecretary and fulltime managing head Elmer C. Hernandez said investors were generally slow to commit projects early in the year since they were still studying their options.

The biggest projects committed in terms of cost were China Ocean Shipping Philippines Inc.'s P1.06 billion electric jetty extension and Iloilo Philippine Cogeneration Assembly Co.'s P676.6million flexible-fuel engine production project.

Other major projects that qualified for incentives were the expansion of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co.'s network facilities, Philippine Global Communications Inc.'s satellite earth station and Philippine Telegraph and Telephone Corp.'s network facilities.

Trade Undersecretary Hernandez said investors are generally optimistic about the country's economic prospects this year.

"Investors are generally optimistic about the economy. They are just waiting for the right time to commit their projects," he said.

Hernandez said the DTI is also optimistic that the country will be able to attract more investments this year.

"We are optimistic that we will be able to attract more investments this year," he said.

Twenty percent for truth?

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

I WAS CERTAINLY SURPRISED LAST WEEK AFTER catching a short interview on TV with a well-known anti-globalization trade market expert, a personal friend no less, as he commented on the effects of the current national situation on the equities market. He lamented how the economy is being undermined by the activities of people who are hungry for power. He then opined that perhaps, politicians should be devoting 80 percent of their attention to getting the economy forward, and only 20 percent to the search for truth and other advocacies.

Misplaced priorities

I was moved to immediately react and actually respond by promptly sending a text message directly to the interviewee, my assistant friend. My message to him was: "He sees IT here in disagree with your priorities, relegating only 20 percent to the search for truth. I would not dismiss the search for truth and accountability as mere hunger for power. An economy not built on truth cannot be sustainable. Now as an economist myself, I do not consider the economy to be the be-all and end-all of our existence. I respect your right to your own opinion, but I am moved to say so."

To be fair, he later explained that his interview had been edited to the point that his message came out quite differently from what he had intended.

Nevertheless, his edited sound bites seemed to illustrate what I believe to be the sad state of the sense of values of too many Filipinos nowadays—including and especially those in positions of power, whether political or economic. I have gotten tired of hearing that real, economic class in the face of our current political crisis, we need to protect the economy and its "stability" or even "impending takeoff" at all costs. But does "at all costs" mean even at the expense of truth, justice and right governance? In my mind, such statements that disregard these fundamental values spell what has been ailing our nation all these years.

More basic values

As I told my friend, I would not consider the economy to be the be-all and end-all of our existence. As an economist myself, I often jest among colleagues to the professions economists as if the economy was everything, and as if an economist had all the answers to the world's problems. I submit that economic well-being is only one of the dimensions of human welfare, the others being the social, environmental, political, cultural and spiritual dimensions. As such, we economists can only claim to have about one-sixth of the answers.

True, economic well-being often makes us possible, or at least easier, to attain welfare in some of the other dimensions. There are many things that money can buy, like truth and righteousness are certainly not among them. As the Jamiroquai song goes, "...you're not for sale," even that has sadly become a commodity that can be bought or sold in this country as well.

Prerequisites

I would argue, in fact, that it's the other way around: truth and righteousness can buy (i.e. are prerequisites for) lasting well-being, including lasting economic welfare. Without these basic elements, any economic improvement we achieve would be illusory, fleeting and transitory. As I told my friend, an economy not built on a foundation of truth cannot be sustainable. In the absence of truth and order respect for it, the economy stands on shaky ground, or as some have put it, a social volcano.

This should not be hard to realize, but is a lesson many people seemingly have yet to take to heart. For an economy to flourish and gain that way, contracts need to be enforced and respected. Transactions need to be transparent. Access to information must be equitable. Initiative must be properly rewarded. Rent seeking must give way to fair competition. Capital must go to its most productive uses, not diverted to favored firms or industries. Taxes must be faithfully paid and collected. And so on. Witness how in the past, erstwhile vigorous economies ultimately collapsed for lack of these ingredients in 2002, the East Asian economies in 1997-98, and Mexico in the early '90s are but a few examples.

Hungry for power?

Worse, I would say, claims outright the ill fates of those who seek to assert truth and accountability in our current crisis as mere manifestations of people hungry for power. If there is anyone hungry for power, I say it must be those who stubbornly cling to it despite a manifest lack of credibility or even legitimacy. True, among the many maneuvering for the reins are personalities most perceive as political villains of discredited dispensations or failed ideologies. But no one has a monopoly on good intentions. I would reserve passing judgment on anyone joining the fight for truth and accountability regardless of political color, when as the age-old saying goes, the ones you shall see in free. If there is one thing that could unite us Filipinos, and indeed all of humanity it is the common quest for those elements that ultimately ennoble us as such.

As Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen argues, it is this freedom both to seek truth and human rights that can be the only basis for building a durable and humane economy, and achieving a development that is truly meaningful. Or should we stop at anything less.

Comments and views are welcome at cielito@mac.com

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Tetangco's big test

THANKS TO THE PHILIPPINE DEPOSIT INSURANCE CORP. AND the "$14.7" shock, Amando Tetangco Jr.'s regulatory future have been momentarily spared from their firing line.

A congressional inquiry prelaged by Malacañang's own seeking allies on behalf of an ailing savings bank has been temporarily shelved.

The House inquiry would ostensibly examine the tough line taken by Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. against bailing out troubled banks.

But, according to the grapevine, the hearing is simply to put the congressional squeeze on PDIC president Nicasio Alcantara to jump in almost P3 billion to keep Jose Cojuangco's money in ecopitalize the troubled bank.

Even with the punative political squeeze, Tan already has a get-out-of-trouble pass, and this is where Tetangco, the new Bangko Sentral governor, comes in. Before doling out any assistance, PDIC must have a Bangko Sentral declaration about the troubled bank's finances.

Despite the Bangko Sentral's findings that the troubled savings bank was close to insolvency as early as 2004, the regulatory declaration has been put off, and the ailing bank is still managed to keep afloat.

How? The pro-Tetangco Bangko Sentral persuaded a newly rehabilitated quasi-state bank to take over the troubled bank's operations, but with the understanding that a PDIC bailout scheme was in place to protect the bigger bank from any fallout.

According to the grapevine, the bigger bank, to protect itself should the promised PDIC assistance fail to push through, required the ailing bank's shareholders to put their necks and personal finances on the line vis-a-vis change for the lifeline. To which the board of the ailing savings bank, despite or probably because of their Ebola and Mike Arroyo connections, did, against their better judgment.

Nearly two years have since passed, and, now, the promised PDIC assistance still has not materialized. But with the bigger bank now feeling the earnings drag and regulatory complications of their below bailout, from whose pockets do you think that P3 billion would eventually be picked from?

Cocktales

Victor C. Agustin

Bank dodges Metrobank

INTERNATIONAL Exchange Bank has managed to dodge off Metrobank from acquiring a board seat in Iteank. That, in essence, is the import of late week's announcement from Philtrust's withdrawing its appeal questioning the rehabilitation court's ruling about the listed property company's $1.86 billion in obligations to Metrobank.

In addition to various properties, Philtrust had pledged its 9-percent stake, good for one board seat, in Iteank in exchange for the Metrobank loan. With Philtrust no longer questioning the court decision, Metrobank would now obtain various Philtrust properties to settle some P1.14 billion in obligations.

The outstanding balance would be payable in installment up to 15 years, still collateralized by the Iteank shares, whose value, incidentally, is now at a premium from the government reverse discount Metrobank was valuing the block price at Iteank's listing.

Money-go-round

■ MIKE ARROYO golf mate Victor Fuchengco is running for chair of the Philippine Stock Exchange. Her foes have stockbroker colleague, Robert Coyiuto Jr., would likely support her, provided Fuchengco also nor the former Supreme Court Justice Jose Vitug's even board candidacy.

■ YOUNGMAKER is shopping around for a new software/hardware distributor to replace its troubled, and overbearing, local representative.

■ YAHOO! Philippine users had problems e-mailing and receiving messages over the weekend because of an engineering upgrade for the popular Web portal.

Heard through the grapevine

MALACAÑANG has agreed to reappoint PDIC president Ricardo Tan to another three-year term.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@philstd.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

From page B1

Profit-taking seen

gain in service revenues to P121 billion. This was driven by the Systems' growth in mobile services of mobile carrier Smart Communications.

"We expect PLDT's earnings to be muted this year given their guidance on selected financial items. While revenues are expected to grow marginally from added contributions of data services (both landline and wireless), another need depreciation expenses stemming from the gradual shift to its Next Generation Network (NGN) will partially offset this growth," Ali Capital said.

Elizabeth C. Jacinto

RCBC eyes new foreign partner

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINE RESIDENTIAL COMMERCIAL Banking Corp. is scouting for a new foreign strategic partner to help it raise at least P5-billion in fresh capital and fill the void in case Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ unloads its 12-percent stake.

RCBC vice chair Cesar Virata told reporters that the bank would like to shore up its core capital to handle the stiffer capital requirements under the International Accounting Standards and Basle 2 framework and clear the story of a strategic foreign partner would be the key.

The other remaining option would be to issue more shares (to the Yuchengco group, which already owns 60 percent of the bank, could not raise to make sure buy the Japanese bank out of RCBC.

"We will be recording our finals. Under the approved of the BSP [Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas], the entire Yuchengco group can invest only up to 60 percent," Virata noted.

He said a new foreign strategic partner could take up the 15 percent stake held by Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ — if and when the newly merged Japanese bank would decide to let go of its stake to rationalize its Philippine operations.

The Yuchengco group is even willing to divest its stake down to 51 percent.

UFJ has long been a strategic partner to RCBC, but such its recent merger with another Japanese lender, Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi which has a full branch in the Philippines, Virata acknowledged that a sellout was a possibility.

"Bank of Tokyo has a branch here, therefore UFJ is withdrawing its officers because they can't stay with us. Now, the merged company must have a staffed presence in the country," he said.

Aside from RCBC, UFJ likewise owns a minority stake in Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.

"We are discussing with several partners to take over [the Japanese stake] or make a strategic investment in RCBC," Virata said.

"Our priority is to get a strategic investor because in our experience with our Japanese investors, is impressed so much our Japanese and Korean clientele, so if we get an investor from another country, it will help," he said.

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Filinvest allocates ₱1.2B for projects

By Abigail L. Ho

FILINVEST Development Corp. has earmarked P1.2 billion this year to build commission buildings within the Filinvest Corporate City in Alabang.

FDC president Josephine Gotianun Yap said that in addition to the four residential and small-office home-office (SOHO) buildings that it recently launched, another four similar buildings were being put up within the area.

These new buildings, she said, would have at least 12 storeys, with some reaching beyond 20 floors, and an average floor area of 1,000 square meters.

Apart from the residential and SOHO condominium buildings, she said the real estate developer was also in the process of putting up the area's location commercial hotspots center near the Alabang Public Market.

This "mangga-type" establishment would cater mainly to commuters and other bargain hunters, she said.

A similar establishment, South Station Grocer, had already opened within the Filinvest Corporate City. Its second phase should be completed within the year.

FDC has also allotted close to P1 billion this year to further develop its Northgate Cyberzone information technology park, also within the Filinvest Corporate City.

Gotianun Yap said that as the contact center and business process outsourcing (BPO) sectors continued to boost the demand for quality office space, the company had to invest in more new buildings within the IT park.

Even while still awaiting the completion of two new buildings, the Plaza A and Plaza 11, FDC is already planning on add yet another building before the year ends "if the market demand so warrants," she said.

The new buildings, she said, would have floor plans similar to the existing buildings within the park. Their would have floor areas of between 1,000 and

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IC to raise capital requirements for insurance firms

Shift to stricter accounting rules prompts hike in fundamentals

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE INSURANCE Commission will push up the minimum capitalization requirement for all new insurance players to boost the fundamentals of the risk-taking industry in line with stricter accounting rules.

Insurance Commissioner Evangelina Herrodilla said she is open to increasing the minimum capital needed to absorb life and non-life businesses.

Insurance firms have until the end of the month to comply.

"There are already so many players in the market," Herrodilla said in an interview. "I initially thought of imposing a moratorium on the issuance of licenses. But I realized: Why not just increase the required capital?"

"If there's a (new insurer) company that needs to be restored, it will also be subject to the same requirement."

Herrodilla said she was looking at three possible minimum capitalization levels, namely for startup insurers—P200 million, P400 million or P600 million.

At present, the minimum capital for a non-life insurer is P90 million. For a life insurer, it is P250 million.

"I imagine that a (new insurer) will have to build up in marketing and distribution channels, make a lot of investments and, with the new (International Accounting Standards), those initial work may no longer be adequate," the IC chief said.

Unlike the banking sector, which has adopted the IAS system for its 2005 financial reporting, the insurance sector's shift to the new accounting rules has been delayed by a number of years.

The new requirements will be implemented to make sure that only strong players are able to set up an insurance business in the Philippines.

"There's a study we're now doing to determine what will be the required capital to secure the viability of new companies now the new law is (in) force," she said.

Herrodilla said it was important to align the minimum capital for non-life insurance with that for life insurance.

"In fact, (our life) is riskier," Herrodilla said. "They say they reinsure their risks, but then reinsuring is difficult."

The rationale for having a lower capital requirement for non-life insurers in the past was that risks were supposedly transferred through reinsurance. But the said investments should really not reinsurers alone.

"There's one company (that) wouldn't pay because its reinsurance company wouldn't pay ... that's ridiculous," she said. "If you're the principal selling company, and if you have a defective refrigerator, can you tell your client I won't pay you because my reinsurer will not pay?"

San Miguel consolidates overseas units

By Elizabeth L. Saavedra

SAN MIGUEL CORP. HAS CONSOLIDATED ITS key food and beverage businesses overseas under Australian unit National Foods Ltd., as it attempts to expand its foothold in the international market.

SMC chief finance officer Ferdinand Constantino told investors at a briefing last Friday that National Foods, which had earlier tie-ups with Australian juice maker Berri Ltd., Malaysian ice cream brand Kings's Creamery Inc. and packaging firm also in Malaysia and a brewery stake in Del Monte Pacific Ltd.

Constantino said the consolidated National Foods would bring San Miguel co-owned brands in China, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Australia, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and possibly India.

With National Foods now in its fold, SMC becomes less dependent on the Philippine markets. Overseas operations and exports will account for 35 percent of the group's revenues or more than double the 17 percent a year ago.

Constantino also said that the integration of the three National Foods would enable San Miguel to generate more than A$50 million in annual savings, which would be realized through the consolidation of the sales and marketing functions. Savings will also be derived from the rationalization of manufacturing, logistics and office facilities, he added.

SMC is also planning to double National Foods' exports to Asia in the next five years and drive future growth through more acquisitions.

In 2005, the revenue contribution of the combined National Foods to SMC hit A$1.39 billion without factoring in the effect of acquisitions.

SMC earlier said that its net income grew 3 percent to P9.33 billion in 2005. Also, domestic beer revenue grew 10 percent to P40.5 billion, reflecting a price increase in February. Sales volume declined 1 percent to 170 million cases because of soft consumer demand.

Despite the increase in net income, operating income for domestic beer grew 13 percent to P8.33 billion. This was attributed to effective cost management efforts.

International beer revenues also grew 8 percent to $283.7 million with growth coming largely from Indonesia and Australia.

Food liquor and cobacco unit San Miguel posted a 26 percent decline in revenue to P5.63 billion, while operating income contracted 64 percent to P986 million.

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MRTC wants to tap road users' tax fund

Settling debts, minimizing need for new borrowings

By Michelle V. Reyes

METRO RAIL TRANSIT CORP., which owns and operates the Metro Rail Transit 3, wants to tap portion of the road users' tax to fund operational requirements.

MRTC said the P3.3 billion allocation, committed by the national government was insufficient to cover its mounting debts.

The company had sought P7.6 billion from the government to settle arrears incurred in 2005 and to fund operations this year.

But due to the government's own budget constraints, the Department of Budget and Management earmarked for MRTC only P2.1 billion of the proposed 2006 national budget.

The amount earmarked for MRTC would come from the additional revenue arising from the recent increase in the value-added tax rate.

Officials of the state transit agency said MRTC will needed P6.7 billion to finance all its operational requirements and service liabilities. They said MRTC had been diverting funds because the fares charged to riders were hardly enough to cover operational expenses.

A government source said MRTC had formally requested the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) to divert to MRTC the fund for the Special Vehicle Pollution Control Fund (SVPCF), which stood at P2.161 billion.

SVPCF is intended for projects aimed at minimizing air pollution. Its funding comes from the road users' tax.

The road users' tax funds are also used for road maintenance, and installation of traffic lights and road safety devices.

However, said MRTC had also obtained the consent of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for the proposed use of SVPCF for MRT-3.

But even if the entire P2.161 billion SVPCF was allocated for MRT-3, MRTC would still be needing another P5.7 billion.

MRTC has long been seeking an increase in its fares for the government's approval.

But the government has been hesitant to approve such an unpopular proposal.

MRTC said its commuters fare should be raised to P72 to breakeven. But since the road assessed fare too high for commuters, MRTC said an adjustment from the current minimum fare of P15 to P20 would be of help to reduce its operating losses.

The government, however, said it was studying the possibility of implementing the fare hike in 2007.

LRTA cuts losses

THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT AUTHORITY has recorded its operation, maintenance and financial targets in 2005, according to Takashi Kitahara, Japan International Cooperation Agency's (Jica) management consultant for railway projects in the Philippines.

Kitahara said LRTA was able to substantially reduce its losses to P820.7 million last year, from P1.46 billion in 2004.

"LRTA has anchors itself in 2005. More trains are running due to faster and more transparent procurement of parts for downed trains. More passengers are taking the train because of the lost fares and enhanced efficiency. Overall, the net losses are smaller due to better planning and management," Kitahara said in his report.

LRT-1 (Jica hotel to Monumento) surpassed its monthly target of 74,083,300 passengers and had 76,809,417 actual passengers in 2005. LRT-2's (Santolan, Pasig to Recto) target ridership of 24,391,704 was exceeded at 30,111,022.

Kitahara said the performance was remarkable, particularly for the 25-year-old trains and tracks of LRT-1.

He said the agency was able to level up its fleet to 75 vehicles by repairing and putting into operation idle units.

Before, LRTA Administrator Mel Robles took over the agency in September 2004, only 64 trains were operational.

A new peak passenger record of 849,888 per day has been set, from the previous high of 338,000/day-or-fifties took over.

The five-year concessionaire contract and administrative agreement in the procurement load time was achieved by the agency streamlining the process.

He said that in 2004, the processing of LRTA's projects took 18 to 21 months. In 2005, the load time was reduced to three months for the procurement of local parts and to six months for foreign-made parts.

1017: A layman's view

SENT BACK IN THE EARLY 1600s, enemies from all sides threatened Prince Ostein, Austria and Spain were raiding their salons. Inside, the Huguenots were in revolt. Even the Queen Mother and the king's mistresses became very shaking the throne. Cardinal Richelieu, minister of state and arguably the greatest statesman in French history, trained all the enemies. French influence spread throughout Europe.

It was Richelieu who first proclaimed for the whole world to hear that when the security of the state is threatened, the state must defend itself with all the forces at its command—even at the sacrifice of individual rights. The preservation of the state's precious individual rights must give way, if necessary, to the higher demands of defending and protecting a threatened state. This principle has resounded throughout history for close to 400 years.

But, when should the state call out the troops? When Marines are shooting at fellow Marines? When blood is already flowing in the streets?

Today, the Richelieu doctrine still rings true. But, to avoid the need to tear down barricades, the state can quicking into action in the face of "clear and present danger" of national security. Such a security put, maybe rebellion in the bud.

In the Harrison Ford movie "Clear and Present Danger" based on the Tom Clancy book, the president of America bowels the drug-lording entangled into the US. He decides that the Colombian drug cartel was a clear and present danger to national security. He tacitly approves the covert Project Bootjacky to wipe out the cartel.

Can we not look at Presidential Dec. 1017 as merely following the age-old Richelieu doctrine and the now-hedged clear and present danger strategy?

Those against 1017 both at the time to it requires. When such is evident—Randy David's axiom, the commentator much to the John chairs, the Time story on Peping and Ray to rite only chaos—it

viewed in isolation, 1017 is indeed an overkill, as Fidel Ramos has claimed.

But the view from the mountaintop is very different. When reports on the entire Bonz Sangres and Hantres, a united alliance between Magdalo chieftain and the NPA, and the inciting to rebellion by media personnel like Melo Acosta, the President had to decide whether a clear and present danger to national security existed.

And when the President decided to spring into action, she did not have to file an application form at the Integrated Bar or the UP Law Center.

Media has charged that the President is mumbling freedom of speech. Media is still regulated. As far as I can see, the government merely wants media to exist in its true roles. In the cutchlaff at the Marine headquarters, ABS-CBN anchors like Ginnimonia and Cat Dillon asked the reporters on the spot where the government's action came from. This clearly violated the code on coup censorship.

Now that defined communism like Cuba keeps dictator Fidel Castro, Noam Chomsky, Lim Wee, et al., have been hauled in on rebellion charges, let us stick to the rule of law. Even in the communist states one democratic system is used in a conflict like this war of life, we should prove to them and to the whole world that we can protect and defend our way of life within our democratic system. If we start breaking the rule of law ourselves, then we shall have lost the war.

By the way, as my friend Joey said the other day, if the coup had succeeded, we would be under a military junta today. So, why bitch?

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Unpaid taxes delay ...

From page B1

rate (BIC-1), another state-owned telecommunications, will also have to be delayed. The government, for instance, is counting on the BIC-1's early offer the privatization of MPH-9 has been completed.

There was an earlier proposal for a joint sale of the two TV stations, but officials were advised that the government could maximize revenue from each of the state assets if these were sold separately.

The government will have to come up with a valuation for MPH-9, Singson said, because the privatization of the fund would go to the upgrade, capacity expansion, environmental compliance requirements and other needs of the firm's various facilities in the country.

The company has manufacturing plants in Calamba, Laguna; Lipa, Batangas; Pulilan, Bulacan; and in the cities of Cagayan de Oro, Quezon and Bacolod.

Stockholders, who is also the company president and chief executive, said SFI had been laying out at least P2 billion annually in the past few years.

Nestle's product lines include milk, infant nutrition, urban food, beverages, ice-dairy creamer, food, ice cream and chilled dairy, breakfast cereals, confectionery and pet care.

The firm also owns established brands such as Nido milk formula, Nestea powdered ice drink, Maggi instant noodles, Alaska dairy

Nestle seeks gov't help ...

From page B1

noted as early as 2002, are being circulated mainly through small tart cart stores," Ilustre said. "Should they end up a source of tax in the hands of the counterfeiters and I was told it has released a total of at least about P3 million for successful operations."

He said that in so, detailing the fake products required special training because counterfeiters keeping local almost exactly the original.

However, Nestle officials said the company has received complaints from customers about the "lowered" quality of their products like the diluted taste of Bonaki, which turned out to be the counterfeit ones.

Nestle said it has new detailing plans to improve its capability to detect fake products while the DTI was studying ways to help to their efforts.

In January, Nestle Philippines chair Nanda Wadhdhwani announced that the firm had earmarked P2.5 billion in capital expenses for

P11B worth of projects ...

From page B1

fuel for tax holidays and other incentives included Procter & Gamble Philippines' P586-million venture in baby diaper production, Asahi with P140 million cell center project, and Philippine Auto Components' P1.11-million project for the production of clutch parts and other components for motor vehicles.

SEC documents showed it has the Board of Investments gave the go-ahead to grant incentives to P2.46 billion worth of projects as of end-February while the Philippine Economic Zone Authority registered P8.44 billion.

For the period, the rate of BOI-listed projects were down by about 41 percent from P4.2 billion while those with PEZA went up 27.6 percent from P6.516 billion.

DTI Secretary Peter B. Favila said investments were expected to continue pouring as companies would have renewed interest in the country especially since the state of national emergency had been lifted.

"The uncertainty caused by recent events is now out of and pursuing investments and presenting the country as a preferred business destination would be much easier," Favila said.

Hernandez said the country may now revive the lost presidents' strong desire not to be a larger share of international electronics ventures contracts "[given] the Filipinos' proven expertise" in information and communication technology.

"Based on trends in outsourcing services, Asia would be a source of significant outsourcing operations from the United States and Europe," he said.

In January alone, investments in the IT sector that were listed with the DTI reached P565 million, or an increase of 20.8 percent from P208.2 million in the same month in 2005.

These projects are expected to create some 6,400 new jobs, both of which are for call center agents.

Allied Bank sees slower growth, considers issuing hybrid capital instruments

By Doris C. Dumlao

TOWNCO MANNER, EXCEL TIMES AL-lied Banking Corp. may issue hybrid capital instruments qualified as tier 1 to raise capital this year to comply with stiffer accounting and capital adequacy rules.

Expecting to post a "slightly lower" profit this year versus last year's net profit of P1.13 billion, Allied Bank is studying the use of hybrid tier 1 capital recently allowed by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, said Allied Bank president Rosendo A. Marking.

Hybrid tier 1 capital instruments have equity-like features, making these acceptable as Tier 1 capital.

These may be in the form of unsecured subordinated debt or preferred shares.

These instruments have no maturity, and are non-cumulative, which means that dividends or coupons that could not be paid in a financial year as a result of poor business performance will not be recovered in subsequent years.

Marking said Allied Bank was preparing for the impact of the new framework governing shareholders' and bank's capital adequacy framework on its financial performance this year.

While the bank has adequate liquidity, Marking said additional capital may be needed to boost its capital adequacy ratio, currently at about 10 percent of risk assets.

"We've ranked 7 (since 12th among the country's) biggest banks. We don't know yet how much we need. We're doing a study on it," Marking said.

More tourists going to E. Visayas

THE EASTERN Visayas region is stepping up its campaign to entice tourists to see its sights, such as the Leyte Landing memorial in Palo.

By Joey A. Gobien
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—FOREIGN tourist arrivals in Eastern Visayas went up 16 percent last year, according to the office here of the Department of Tourism.

Data from the DOT-8 records showed that of the 149,300 tourists that visited the different parts of the region last year, 11,648 were foreigners, up 16 percent from 9,861 in 2004.

Most of the foreigners were American, Korean and Japanese, with a few Europeans.

Karina Tirpas, regional director, said the increase in the number of foreign visitors in the region was good news for the region's tourism industry.

"This is a positive development because this means that we are attracting our preferred tourists," Tirpas told the business. "They are the ones that are really bringing in the dollars, which could really help our economy.

Tirpas said that based on the monitoring of different hotels, lodging houses and restaurants, almost all of the foreign visitors went to either Ormoc City or this city, the regional capital.

The two leading cities of the region had a combined 18,864 foreign visitors.

Calbayog City in Samar, was able to have 612 foreign visitors.

Of the provinces, Eastern Samar had the least foreign visitors or 29, while Biliran had the most at 208.

The tourism regional director, however, said the number of foreign visitors in the region could be higher as many establishments in the region did not provide the DOT with the needed data.

She said early 41 out of the more than a hundred tourists establishments in the region had provided them a copy of records of their clients.

She also noted that Eastern Visayas still lagged behind other tourist destinations in the Visayas.

Thus, Tirpas said the DOT was stepping up its campaign to attract more overseas here, including domestic travelers.

Tirpas said that while the region has natural wonders that could rival with those found in other parts of the country, the region still lacks the needed infrastructure, like better roads and facilities.

The presence of armed men, notably the New People's Army, in some parts of the region, has also turned off tourists, she said.

"The tourism industry is a very volatile industry that depends on the peace and order in an area and merely affect the tourists industry," she said.

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ROUND-UP

Healthcare meets education

TCI, THE PHILIPPINES' LARGEST NETWORK OF nursing colleges, has acquired a significant stake in Bataan Doctors Medical Center. To be renamed BLS-TCI Medical Center, the new partnership combines the strength of a pioneer in healthcare services and the competitive edge of a leading information technology-based education institution.

The buy-in is part of TCI's initiative to strengthen its investment in 3 deployment facilities across the country. Student's meals from the three facilities in BTI to the moment for upgrades for scale.

Some of the major components of the plan is to improve the facilities and capabilities of the new BLS-TCI Medical Center. With fresh capital, a medical arts building and a state-of-the-art training facility will be added to the existing infrastructure. BLS-TCI will also set up satellite clinics around Metro Manila. In addition, the bird expects to refit its student to 2000 to accommodate more patients and complement its phone response hospital services.

According to TCI's president and CEO Dr Manuel Jacob, the BLS-TCI Medical Centre is expected to improve its revenues by an annual average growth of 30% to 35 percent starting this year. TCI acquired a majority share in Cebu Doctors College in 2000 and formed into BLS-TCI College of Health Professions.

Roadshow off to Canada

DENR Secretary Angelo T. Reyes and Chamber of Mines of the Philippines president Benjamin Philip G. Romualdez head a 50-man delegation from the public and private sectors to attend the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) Mining Conference.

The PDAC is the largest gathering of mining players in the world. With the increase in global demand for minerals, the Philippines expects to attract big chunks of investors' interest in the country's fast-growing mineralization of the local mining industry.

Following the successful participation of the Philippines in MINEXPO 2004, the government and the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines are possessing a special session of the PDAC 2006 Conference, entitled Republic of the Philippines: Opportunities in the Mining Sector.

The special session will showcase a range of mining opportunities in the country, enhanced by the government's policy of actively promoting and supporting the development of the countries mining industry, and how companies are taking advantage of these opportunities.

LR takes on First Cagayan

PSE: LR / 1.87 LR Leisure & Resorts World Corp. (LR) is taking over majority control of First Cagayan Leisure and Resorts Corp. in a deal to list on the Philippine Stock Exchange. LR said it will subscribe to 40,000 new shares to be issued by First Cagayan at P500 a share for a total of P20 million.

Upon issuance of the shares, LR's ownership in First Cagayan will increase to about 50.1% from 20 percent.

First Cagayan is a service provider for Bicol-ban gaming industry. On behalf of Ban Cagayan Economic Zone Authority, it also processes and approves the license applications of international players wanting to locate within Cagayan Special Economic Zone and Free Port. An investor licensee, it is also tasked to regulate and monitor all Internet gaming related activities to ensure compliance with established rules and regulations.

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- Setting organizational KPIs
- Cascading organizational KPIs into individual KPIs
- Designing targets and measures
- Setting individual KPIs, targets and processes
- Linking the KPIs with performance management processes and compensation

About the Facilitator
Ms. Rue Hemisyan is a Senior Consultant with Mercer Human Resource Consulting. Rue's work focuses on reward, performance and talent management which involves developing reward strategies and structures, performance management systems, competency frameworks and career & talent management processes. She has worked with private, government and government-owned organizations to better improve their people strategies and management processes. Rue has worked in Mercer Australia and now currently works for Mercer Taiwan, based in Taipei.

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Editor Leo Magno

iBlog, iPodcast: Citizen journalism using IT

(First of five parts)

By Leo Magno

MONDAY MORNING. WEEK meantime for Malaysian civil servant Oei Hong Leong. He would get up, go to work and analyze data about telecommunications companies.

But why did this business analyst for an advertising company find himself at the Selangor State Criminal Investigation Department (CID) on July 20, 2005, instead of going to work Monday morning?

That morning, Oei was summoned by the CID. He was under investigation for a probable crime under Section 298A of the Penal Code of Malaysia, which carries a penalty of two to five years' imprisonment. Oei was threatened with detention under the Internal Security Act, which allows for detention without trial for up to two years. He also faced prosecution under the Sedition Act of Malaysia.

Anyone can be charged with sedition, and journalists are known to have had their fair share of such charges. But Oei was not a journalist. Even as journalists use the proverbial pen as a weapon, neighbors liken the sword. Oei was not trained in the ways of the traditional media profession. And yet he wielded a weapon equally powerful.

And so for two hours, he found himself being interrogated in prison-like surroundings.

Later on Oct. 23, 2005 (a Sunday), 24-year-old photographer Lee Johnson Alimurung got slapped with a three-year jail term and a fine of up to 5,000 Singapore dollars ($2,950) for evading Singapore's Sedition Act.

SPECIAL REPORT

What could he have done to get the Singapore government's attention?

How did the stories of Oei and Lee touch government in the first place? What medium did they use?

These two private Asian individuals had something in common with many others across the region. Oei and Lee were not part of traditional media, and yet they got the attention of hundreds of thousands of people. To so doing, they also got the attention of their respective governments' watch— using citizens' vulnerability to strict state sedition and censorship laws—driving it begun to squeeze at that open wound.

So what do an advertising analyst and a photographer have in common?

Oei is a blogger. Lee is a podcaster. They used new media but they did not get censored on the methods employed by traditional media people such as newspaper journalists, radio announcers or TV reporters. Neither do they appear to any traditional medium like newspapers, radio nor TV. Still, their voices were heard, resulting in the near-lifting of sedition charges for Oei and Lee.

In the case of Oei who has been

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If you plan on running professional programs or have some very specialized tasks, you may need to add some components to your computer such as a video card with graphics accelerator, digital cameras, web cams, etc.

6. Don't Skimp on Security!
You cannot afford to risk your business's data. Make sure your computer is powerful enough to run anti-virus software while not disrupting other programs.

7. Memory
For basic applications, you should have a minimum of 256 Megabytes (MB) of RAM while you should have a minimum of 512MB for graphics programs. Basic word processing requires a hard drive that is 40Gigabytes (GB) but if you are dealing with a lot of images, music, or video large files, you should invest in at least 80GB.

8. Power
Again, consider how the computer will be used. If you often use complex interactive programs or do a lot of multitasking, then invest in the Intel® Pentium® D processor supporting Hyper-Threading Technology for energy PCs. Meanwhile, the Intel® Centrino® Duo is the best bet for notebooks.

9. Cheaper isn't always better
Your computer is an investment that should provide three years of optimal performance for reliability PC and two years for a notebook. It should also provide headroom and flexibility for new software or more demanding image-intensive new times. IT should be a long-term relationship, so select a company and brand you can trust.

10. Don't be afraid to ask for help
Knowing a few essential PC terms will help you navigate through a sales pitch. Get to know what you need in a PC before going to the store and buying one.

###

*Other names and brands may be claimed as the property of others.

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blogging for three years, his online journal/ e-zine once first noticed by Malaysiakini (http://www.malaysiakini.com/), a news website that is purely online with no institutional media counterpart. His blog called Screenshot (http://www.jeffooi.com/) was linked to the news website in April 2005, expanding Ooi's readership base. However, it was on Dec. 3, 2004 when he was first noticed by the mainstream press, by top intellectual in an editorial of the New Straits Times (which is owned by the ruling political party Umno (United Malays National Organization).

On Sept. 30, 2004, Ooi posted on Screenshot his views about Umno. The discussion continued for one month between the writers of Ideas' Hadhari, a theory of government based on the principles of Islam, and the alleged corruption of the ruling Malaysian party. But its mainstreaming dominant party forces to his blog, for his views to be countered or attacked but not in a sensitive way. The Straits Times's New Straits Times naturally retaliated, lambasting Ooi in its Dec. 3, 2004 editorial. Soon, Ooi's name was in all the major newspapers in Malaysia. Ooi did not submit to questioning by no politics, and eventually was drawn into a word war with New Straits Times Group editor in chief Ruhmilah Hassan who referred to Ooi in an editorial as a "mere netizen blogger."

Four months later on that fateful Monday morning of 9th, 28, 2005, Ooi was brought in for questioning by the Selangor State CID.

The New Straits Times Group has banned its columnists from reading pro-Ooi blog. Today, the New Straits Times and sister publication Berita Harian continue criticizing Ooi in behalf of ruling party Umno. The New Straits Times also in a malicious attack of 420,000 a day Ooi fought back through his blog, which gets about 15,000 visits a day.

But this was not a battle of who had more readers. The point is here the blog of an individual citizen, through his own funding and effort and with no training in media, could to a span of three years meet the attention of a well-established news corporation like New Straits Times which has been around since 1845. Why would the newspaper even care? Why would its owners, the ruling Umno party, even worry about what a "mere netizen blogger" said? Why would a big newspaper publishing group issue an order just to read the posts of one particular blogger?

Leo of Singapore could probably relate to what Ooi went through.

On Sept. 12, 2005, the Singapore government invoked the Sedition Act—the first time in 19 years and the first time for an online case—in charge with author Meggie Nicholas Lim Wee, 25, and Benjamin Koh Song Hee, 27, for posting allegedly racist comments. On Sept. 16, blogger Gan Huai Shi, a 17-year-old student, was charged on seven counts of "promoting ill-will" in Singapore under Section 298 of the Sedition Act. It is a crime. Fact: Ooi, charged with sedition, Singaporeans' free speech seems to be of a matter years if sustained.

Leo and he did not know any of the three bloggers, but he was quick to urge the all-encompassing Sedition Act and how it was used against them.

Leo said the Sedition Act had never before been used in Singapore against individuals, and that the three bloggers were separately charged as individuals in September. He believed that the law was being used to attack individuals' right to free speech. In protest, he put up a post sure as a blog called TheSmallbe [http://gansedition.blogspot.com/] which he quickly created not only with friends. The blog was a personal one and was not political in nature, but Leo felt as strongly about the September sedition cases that he made a digital recording of his conversation and turned it into a podcast so that, quite literally, his voice would be heard. Little did he know that, during the heat of the issue in Singapore, the Media Development Authority would also look in right on him.

Leo was "greatly astounded" by the government that he, too, could be subjected to charges of sedition if he continued to go where he was going. Leo took down the podcast from TheSmallbe blog and left the other non-sensitive and non-political ones on his site.

Leo admitted that he had, indeed, been censored and came close to being charged with sedition the same way the three bloggers were in September. Still, he could not understand why the government would be afraid of his opinion because, he said, his podcast was not popular anyway and he was merely updating it as a hobby.

Indeed, what were they afraid of? Why would a government have an individual podcaster's views be censored?

Here we see more pressures clamping down on citizens. We see not even discussing freedom of the press here, for Ooi and Leo are not press people. But in these two examples, the same forces are clamping down on individuals. Why would individual citizens' voices affect others when they do not have the reach of traditional media like newspapers, radio or TV?

Or do they?

Perhaps individual citizens are already empowered to the point that **governments are realizing that,** through new media such as blogs and podcasts, they could already create the visible chaos on online.

Perhaps government is realizing that, like views from traditional media, views from the grassroots are also becoming influential, necessitating control measures before their influence and power become even greater.

On the traditional media front, why would established newspapers like New Straits Times pick on a lone blogger like Malaysia's Ooi? Could this also be an acknowledgement that individual voices, with the help of new media, are gaining in strength and deserve an audience? Could it be that traditional media feel threatened?

Sometimes mainstream newspapers pick up topics that are being discussed in blogs and develop them in to stories," Ooi said. "So they get ideas, relayed as news items in mainstream—they steal from blogs that are picked up by mainstream media and then hopefully they touch the pressure of administration. So we hope government becomes responsive through blogging efforts."

As now we are an upward direction—in the information flow, or what citizen journalism advocate Dan Gillmor refers to as "bottom up commerce/media" from the citizens, views are expressed through new media such as blogs and podcasts. Media pick up these views and views and put them in to the mainstream. From the mainstream, the bloggers and podcasters are recognized and hopefully those views would be heard by some policy/economic leaders.

"We need to promote blogs and grassroots grassroots journalism," said Ooi. "We need to dismantle the power paradigm, that is, the power talking down to the people. It has to be the other way around."

In concrete terms, Ooi and Leo were not just bloggers and podcasters. Citizen Ooi was questioning Umno politics in Malaysia and citizen Leo was questioning the Sedition Act of Singapore.

An upward spiral of views from the grassroots to decision-makers' supreme two things: realization and acknowledgment. Traditional media, governments and non-movers should feel confident that the top-down approach no longer works in a connected knowledge economy where information cannot be monopolized nor restrained. This cannot acknowledgment that yes, indeed, the individual voices of citizens matter and that the agenda should be set by them.

Perhaps that a why censorship and sedition charges are being thrown at individual bloggers and podcasters. Perhaps they are growing more and more influential, and the old power base is being threatened.

We'll discuss this next week.

(To be continued)

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Metro Ma. 1300

NOTICE OF EXTENSION OF THE DEADLINE TO SUBMIT THE BEST OFFER (BLOCK SALE OF EQUITABLE-PCIBANK SHARES)

In view of the requests of interested parties brought about by recent events/developments, the deadline for the submission of the offers to purchase 69.6B holdings of Equitable-PCI Bank common shares is hereby extended to April 6, 2006.

The invitation to submit the best offer follows:

The GSIS hereby offers in a block sale its holdings of 90,678,333 Equitable-PCI Bank shares, equivalent to 12.4% of the Bank's outstanding capital stock, at a minimum cash offer of P52.00 per share.

Offers to purchase should be accompanied by a cashier's or manager's check equivalent to ten (10%) percent of the total offered price and should be submitted not later than April 6, 2006, 3:00 pm at the following address:

MS. LIVIA ALICIA R. RAMOS
Vice President, Investment Office
Level 3, Core D, GSIS Building
Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City

Interested parties should comply with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) rules and regulations on ownership restrictions or caps, and all other applicable laws, rules and regulations.

The GSIS reserves the right to reject any or all offers and to annul the process, to waive any required formality therein, or to accept such offers as may be advantageous to the GSIS without giving any reason therefor and without incurring any liability to the affected offeror/s. Further, the offeror shall be liable for any and all costs incurred in its participation and the GSIS assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the offeror/s or any of its agents, for expenses or losses that may be incurred in participating in this undertaking.

For more information, contact Ms. Ramos at telephone numbers 834-2640 and 851-0161 local 4081.

(Original Signed)
AMELITA J. TAMICO
Executive Vice President
Finance Sector

Ayala unit sees P1B in revenues from new contracts

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

AYALA PROPERTY MANAGEMENT CORP. (APMC), the wholly owned facilities management arm of Ayala Land Inc. (ALI), expects to churn out P1 billion in total revenues from new contracts over the next two years, APMC president Raul M. Manila said.

To date, APMC has generated P600 million in revenues from management contracts involving waterworks, conservation, parking lots and, recently, Terminal 2 and 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, and the International School in Manila.

APMC's contract with PIATA 2 and 3—under which the firm will manage basic terminal services—will run for three years beginning 2005.

APMC also manages facilities of the Ayala Corp. and other institutional accounts.

This year alone, APMC hopes to secure P300 million in additional institutional accounts and the management of 1,200 new parking slots. Manila said APMC has been retained by a large private hospital to manage its parking lot area. APMC now manages a total of 12,000 parking slots in the Makati area.

This year, APMC aims to raise P1.08 billion in additional revenues from new contracts.

APMC recently gained a triple certification for occupational health and safety from the Certification International Philippines Inc.

APMC is engaged in integrated property management services, including building administration and maintenance, lease administration services, commercial center and subdivision maintenance, and special janitorial services. It continues to provide property management services for shopping centers, subdivisions, parking structures, waterworks operations and other properties developed by Ayala Land and its subsidiaries.

APMC is also known for managing strategic parking facilities, office and industrial estates in the Philippines' premier business district. It pioneered in automating parking operations and continues to introduce similar innovations in other areas of operation, such as recycling water from households for non-potable uses.

APMC introduced the first automated tax-push management system in parking structures, such as the Greenbelt Mall, Ayala Areas 1 & 2, Makati Medical Center, Makati Avenue Steel, Ayala Avenue Steel, Park Square 1 & 2, and University 4.

Among its services, APMC runs a building management system, operating structures like Tower One & Exchange Plaza, ATM, and the Makati Stock Exchange. This system enables the monitoring of elevators, fire prevention, security and other building functions from a central office.

Del Monte sets aside $8M for expansion

DEL MONTE PACIFIC LTD., OWNED BY FOOD and beverage giant San Miguel Corp. and the Campos Group, is setting aside $8 million (roughly P400 million) for capital expenditures this year, according to its disclosure to the Singapore Exchange.

Part of the fund would be used as Del Monte explores non-traditional packaging formats for its products, such as pineapple and plastic cups, due to higher growth potential and margins compared with increasingly competitive cans.

"But this does not mean that we will drop the canned segment altogether as this is still our core business," Del Monte Manila said in a briefing note.

"From within the canned category, there are certain segments which offer growth potential such as the cups of fruit. We are happy to have made meaningful sales of these value-added products to the global markets in 2005."

Del Monte allocated a budget to duplicate its success in the Philippines in its other markets, like China and India.

Sales in the Philippines grew 11 percent in the fourth quarter last year with strong growth in the tomato-based product segment.

Del Monte launched new products here, particularly in the grocery segment, such as Fibre Cuhada 200 drink and sauce-makes, and new products in the food segment, such as Del Monte Coffee and Tea syrups, Maple and All Purpose Light syrup and Party Mixers.

What may put a dent on growth is the implementation of the expanded Value Added Tax (VAT) law in the Philippines, which is expected to impact on operating results.

Del Monte said that for its other markets, it will cap expenses and focus on export development.

"The China market is a difficult one. We will capitalize on its strength in the low cost supplier of apple, and some for its, this is the low cost supplier of mango, to offer export products to the international market," Del Monte said.

"In the Philippines, we continue to develop new products and add new/alternative channels."

Del Monte also said its new customers were studying all of its operations.

"When talking of change , we would rather borrow the positive changes they can bring," Del Monte said when asked about changes in management or possible rewards/incentives in light of its takeovers by Nutri-asia and San Miguel. Elizabeth L. Sanchez

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Filinvest allocates . . .

From page B1

2,000 square meters.

Some buildings could be built to suit the needs of the tenants, she said, similar to the HSBC building, which had 3,000-square-meter floor plates.

The new six-story Plaza A and Plaza D buildings will boost Filinvest's aggregate leasing portfolio in the IT park to 60,000 square meters from the current 40,000 square meters.

Plaza A, which already had "a corner center of a distinguished service company" leasing three of its six floors, would likely be 100-percent leased by next month, Estacuan-Tup said.

Measure expected to boost energy sector

By Abigail L. Ho

THE RENEWABLE Energy Act of 2006, which the House committee on energy recently approved, is expected to boost investments in the sector and offer a "ballast" change to the country's energy mix.

In a statement over the weekend, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla said the perks contained in the bill should encourage potential investors to infuse capital into the renewable energy sector.

Some of the incentives included in the bill are exemptions from tariff duties and zero-rated value-added tax for the importation of machinery and equipment for the first 10 years of an operating contract, as well as tax credit on domestic capital equipment and services.

Right now, even without the bill, several incentives are already being provided for the development of renewable energy resources.

With the bill, Lotilla said the country's dependence on imported oil should go down to 30 percent in 2010 from the present 57 percent.

For Global Steel, viability comes in a protectionist package

By Bernard W. Dominguez

THE FORMER NATIONAL STEEL CORP. may be running out the days when Malacañang will implement protectionist measures that will ensure the viability of the country's steel industry by increasing tariffs on imported steel products.

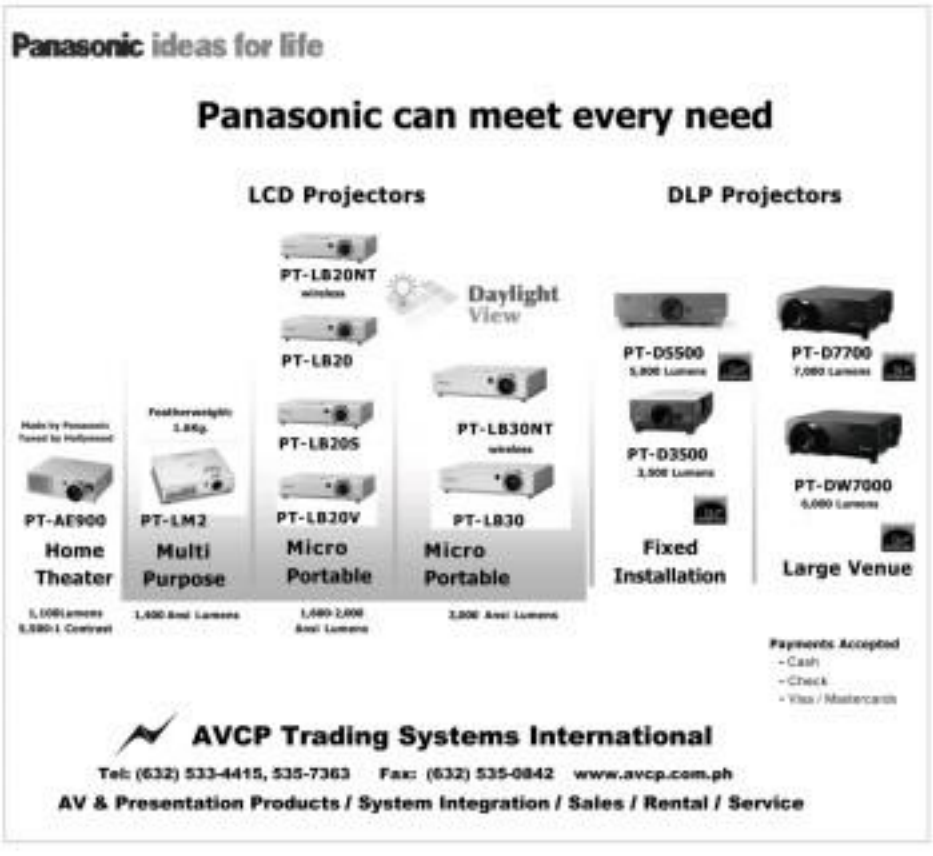
The government is expected to come out with a set of guidelines that will determine whether Global Steel (Philippines) Inc. has attained full commercial operations status before increasing the tariffs.

GSPI, a subsidiary of London-based Global Infrastructure Holdings Ltd., had earlier asked for incentives like government and this would only come about when the steel firm was fully operational.

Another group in the matter said the Cabinet-level Committee on Tariffs and Related Matters have already approved a draft of the guidelines.

In 2004, Malacañang raised Executive Order No. 295, which provides for an increase in steel tariffs imposed from fourteen days.

As stated in EO 295, the increase in tariffs is meant to address the need for an "enabling environment for the local iron and steel industry to attain international competitiveness."



Japanese business sentiment on RP improving

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE PESSIMISM THAT PREVAILED among Japanese firms over business prospects in the Philippines in the last months has started to diminish, a monthly survey by the Japan External Trade Organization showed.

The survey covered Japanese firms here and in other Southeast Asian countries.

The survey indicated that the Japanese investors' business confidence in the Philippines had improved slightly in February to -8.4 from -14.9 in the previous month.

The improvement was noted despite an overall decline in business confidence in the region.

Jetro data showed that Japanese companies and affiliates doing business in the Philippines have given the country a negative diffusion index rating in the past 18 months.

Also, the report said business sentiment on the country in the next two or three months might drop substantially to a rating of -4.4.

The report did not mention the political turmoil that happened in the last week of February, probably because the survey was completed earlier in the month.

Further, Jetro said the overall sentiment on the original members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations—including Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore—declined in February "as these countries struggled to cope with rising interest rates and inflation, as well as the weakening domestic demand."

The aim of the survey is to provide up-to-date information on business conditions to Asian economies to help companies develop more effective business strategies.

Jetro polls the companies to measure year-on-year changes in their business outlooks for the current month and the next two or three months. The answers are engrossed in "SI," which is derived from the difference between the ratio of positive and negative responses.

Firms were asked to compare earnings prospects, supply and demand, inventory, sales prices and accounts receivable with the same period a year earlier.

When Jetro started the monthly poll in June 2001, the Philippines had a negative in five 10 months with the DI rating bottoming it negative 48.9 in December 2001 and peaking at 22.9 in September 2004.

In the last 12 months, the Philippines posted a DI rating of 1.9 in January 2005 and hit a low of -8.4 last June.

DA gets P1B in additional budget for '06

THE GOVERNMENT WILL INVOKE ADDITIONAL AUTHORITY under the farm sector to increase rice production by at least 300,000 metric tons, the Department of Agriculture said.

The additional funds were deemed necessary by the country's economic managers to accelerate the growth of the economy this year, Agriculture Secretary Domingo F. Panganiban said Monday.

Panganiban said that would form part of the pump-priming efforts that were intended to jack up the country's rice production to 14.9 million metric tons and cut down imports this year. The production target is higher than the 14.6 million metric tons of rice produced last year.

The agriculture sector, which accounts for a fifth of the gross domestic products, grew by only 2.24 percent in 2005.

The Department of Agriculture is targeting to double this to at least 4.5 percent this year.

He said the additional budget would be used to repair irrigation dams and build additional canals. Jaimie is preparations for the onset of rainfall arising from the La Niña weather phenomenon.

The La Niña, which may shower the summer months this year, may also help improve rice production this year.

"However, this will entail more farm support — access to credit, seeds and other inputs — for a about 2.3 million farmers in the countryside," Panganiban added.

The additional amount will increase the DA's budget to P4 billion.

The state agency Development Budget Coordinating Council earlier approved the release of some P3 billion for the repair of existing irrigation facilities and construction of new ones to cover 1.2 million hectares of farmlands nationwide. Some P500 million would be earmarked for the purchase and distribution of inputs such as seeds and fertilizers.

Panganiban said the scheduled repair of these facilities had been postponed for more than one year due to slow disbursements of funds.

GOINGS-ON

Flashutters turns 33

FLASHLIGHT SYSTEMS INC., the country's largest manufacturer of roll-up shutters and steel doors, is celebrating its 33rd year in existence.

Called the Cro-Shutter is now the Mobility Flash Door, the designs will be introduced at the World-Info 2006.

The new products are the company's answer to the growing demand for more economical, secure and sturdy flash doors. During the event, other products will be featured. These are the "B. Cassettes (CC Patent) steel flash door, the "Hi-Solar Stopper Door and the Classic Shutters.

Employers' conference

THE EMPLOYERS CONFEDERATION of the Philippines will host the 37th National Conference of Employers on May 23 and 24, 2006, at the Manila Hotel.

This year's conference adopted the theme, "Survive, Compete, Succeed."

The conference organizing committee this year is headed by Cesar Maria O. Blanco, chair and president of Unilever Philippines.

WellPac names proxy, CEO

WELLPAC MOBILE INC., the mobile applications developer and content provider arm of Smart Communications Inc., recently named Ray C. Espinosa as its president and chief executive officer.

Also, WellPac co-founder Raymund Oliver Espinosa was appointed chief operating officer.

Espinosa is also the concurrent president and CEO of ePLDT Inc. (ePLDT), the wholly-owned ICT subsidiary of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company. Prior to joining PLDT in 2000, Espinosa was a senior partner in SyCip Salazar Hernandez & Gatmaitan.

Bridge program lauded

THE PHILIPPINE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE and Industry praised the President's Bridge Program, which has so far constructed 1,210 permanent modular steel bridges throughout the country, for boosting economic growth in 54 countryside.

PCCI president Donald Dee said that because of the bridge-building program, more Filipinos, especially those in the countryside, have gained ready access to farm-to-market roads.

Dee said the bridge program complemented the 10-day Masaklo Nautical Highways, and, if properly implemented and maintained, would increase economic activities in the country.

The President's Bridge Program is financed by a grant from the government of the United Kingdom. Consisted with a P6 Philippine-produced British bridge construction from Malaysia and Johnson was designated the sole supplier of steel bridge materials for P6P Malaysia and Johnson is the only British company that manufactures pre-fabricated panel-style permanent steel bridges.

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February 2005

SMART

USD70 Million
GSM PHASE II
LOAN FACILITY

Mandated Lead Arranger/Facility

May 2005

SAN MIGUEL CORPORATION

USD1.15 Billion
BRIDGE LOAN FACILITY

Joint Lead Arranger

July 2005

SM

Php 3 Billion
FIXED-RATE NOTES DUE 2010
FIXED-RATE NOTES DUE 2012

Bookrunner and Joint Lead Arranger

October 2005

SAN MIGUEL CORPORATION

USD 650 Million
RE-FINANCING FACILITY

Joint Lead Arranger

November 2005

USD 500 Million
SYNDICATED TERM LOAN FACILITY

Lead Arranger

November 2005

BANCO DE ORO

Php 2.9 Billion
NEGOTIABLE CERTIFICATES OF DEPOSIT DUE 2010

Arranger

December 2005

GLOBE TELECOM

USD 100 Million
RE-FINANCING FACILITY

Co-Lead Arranger

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BUSINESS Monday

E-mail: pi_business@inquirer.com.ph

Business Features Editor Margie Quiroga Espino

Economic hits, and misses, of the past 20 years

Average GNP growth of different administrations

The average gross national product (GNP)—total value of goods and services produced and performed including income from abroad, including remittances from Filipino workers) of the past (and present) administrations during the past 20 years are quite revealing.

Corazon Aquino (1986-1991): 6.028 percent

Fidel V. Ramos (1992-1997): 4.281 percent

Joseph Estrada (1998-2000): 3 percent

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001-2005): 4.06 percent

By Margie Quiroga-Espino

THIS ARTICLE WAS meant to be part of the celebrations of the 20th anniversary of the 1986 People Power Revolution. Overtaken by events the past week, we still deem it relevant to feature.

We asked two economists who were former Economic Planning Secretaries to assess what, in their minds, were the economic policy hits and misses of the past 20 years.

We also provided a small summary of how the economy as measured by the gross national product, performed on the average during each administration of the past two decades.

Capetano Paderanga

Former National Economic and Planning secretary, PVR administration

Cory Aquino hits

- Recovery from a deep economy
- Resumption of industrial restructuring reforms
- Reorganization of government
- Strategic use of official development assistance avoidance

- Began the liberalization of the price

Misses

- Unfinished liberalization of telecom and shipping
- No energy alternatives put in place after the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant was scrapped

Fidel Ramos hits

- Regaining international respect and credibility built personal economic benefits, climax (semi-economic recovery
- Trade investment and cooperation extended

Solita Monsod

Former Neda secretary

Aquino administration

Cory Aquino hits

- Restoration of democracy
- Reduction of poverty

Misses

- Low appropriation—not committed to debt reduction

Fidel Ramos hits

- No coup attempts during his time but economically gentle with coup participants
- Significant poverty reduction

Misses

- Too much hype
- Extremely gentle with coup participants

- Monetary and fiscal policies of Ecuba were not followed

Joseph Estrada hits

- Monetary policy became rational
- "The Central Bank did not attempt to push things up by raising the interest rate."

Misses

- Poverty increased
- Absolute employment decreased

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo hits

- Economic figures are good, more jobs, employment, growth

Misses

- Has able to unify the nation
- "Although I did not vote for her, she is more intelligent than she deserves."

DR. THOMAS ENDERS, CEO of EADS in Singapore.

Security is big business

By Tita Arce-Dumlao

SINGAPORE—THE SEPT. 11 (9/11)-style attack on the United States has made security a top priority across the continents.

Because of the growing feeling of vulnerability, governments with money have stepped up their purchases of the latest in defense equipment, such as military planes, helicopters, missiles, guns, communications gadgets and chips for border patrols.

Risk is no exception, so it is also plagued by internal and cross-border conflicts, thus, presents an immense market for companies in the multi-billion dollar defense industry such as European Aeronautic Defence and Space Co, Europe's premier aerospace and defense company.

EADS co-chief executive officer Thomas Enders said in a recent briefing here that he expected sales in Asia to account for 20 percent of total turnover by 2009 and 30 percent of EADS total revenues by 2015, from just 15.5 percent in 2004, as EADS concentrates on markets outside its home region of Europe.

EADS was founded in 2000 by merging the Aerospatiale Matra S.A. (France), Construcciones Aeronauticas S.A. (Spain) and Daimler-Chrysler Aerospace AG (Germany).

The alliance made EADS the leading defense and aerospace company in Europe, with brands such as Airbus (airplanes), Eurocopter (civil helicopters), Eurofighter (military helicopters), MBDA (helicopter group), Matra (missile), Cilas (satellite) and Astrium (launcher).

With its sights in Europe mind, EADS has decided to challenge rivals, particularly from the United States, for a big chunk of the growing Asian market.

One of the factors that will fuel that growth is demand for new security equipment by China, India, Korea and Russia, Enders said.

He added that EADS would position itself in the market by entering into joint ventures and cooperation within the region, as well as through acquisitions.

"We want to intensify our global reach into other markets," Enders said.

Christian Brinnin, head of EADS' marketing arm, said entering new markets would entail an increased presence by EADS in the region, although it already has offices and subsidiaries in Singapore, Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Thailand, Taiwan and Vietnam.

It will also mean sharing the region what it has to offer.

EADS had a chance to do that when it participated in the recently concluded Asian Aerospace show held here last month as the biggest foreign exhibitor—another way of showing Asia what the Europeans are marked.

EUROCOPTER is the world's leading helicopter manufacturing company, which many countries in Asia using its products for civilian and paramilitary purposes.

BUSINESS Monday

BUSINESSMEN homed a sigh of relief when President Arroyo lifted Proclamation 1017

Postscript to 1017

WHEN PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO issued Presidential Proclamation No. 1017, which put the Philippines under a state of emergency, businessmen in Metro Manila were more on its possible impact on the economy.

Last Friday Arroyo lifted the order.

But prior to the lifting, Inquirer correspondents called on local businessmen and officials about the effect of the controversial proclamation on their operations.

Hardly any effect in Luzon

By Phil Stevenson Lemos Bureau
and PDI Central Luzon Desk

Local officials were initially worried about Proclamation 1017, but as it turns out, it hardly had any effect on business operations in northern Luzon.

"There were rather rumors in many areas.

Eduardo City Mayor Benjamin Lim, the head of the Magic Group of Companies, said business has been decelerating since February because of the implementation of the revised value-added tax (VAT).

He said the situation could worsen because of the lingering effects of the declaration of the state of national emergency.

He explained that foreign investors and tourists were expected to shun the Philippines because the declaration meant that the country was under an "ala-terrorist condition."

"Who would invest in a country where the situation is not normal?" he asked.

"Business has been turning from bad to worse. The consumers are very cautious and have not been spending much, perhaps because they think the worse is yet to come. I myself don't spend as much as I do," Lim said.

Pilmen Chua, head of Bisaya Inc., said the company prepared for the eventuality that government will take over utilities like telecommunications firms.

He said that if the government takes over telecommunications firms and bars internet service providers like Bisaya from using them, then "we can use dial up services of the United States."

Romulo So, a businessman based in Urdaneta City, said it would be "good" if government takes over some businesses as officials would know how businesses are faring.

"We are doing brisk business here," said Gerard Chan, owner of the Ambassador Bakeshop in Agoo.

Victor Uy, owner of the National Bazaar in San Fernando City, said "business cannot thrive if there is disorder and political uncertainty."

"We are suffering because of high prices and there are only few buyers," said Evelyn Lumbreras, a small eatery owner in Bauang, La Union.

In Subic, Ismael Atienza, owner of the Centro Shell in Cawayan City, described the proclamation as an "overkill".

In Baguio City, Stella Abcede, operations manager of the call center firm Stats-ay E-Link Inc., said news about emergency rule convinced a number of his clients in the United States to withdraw last week, because they thought it would lead to another martial law.

An official of the Baguio City Economic Zone, on the other hand, said operations at the zone have not been disrupted because most firms there have been assured that Baguio-based workers have learned to translate themselves from political events in Metro Manila.

The Baguio zone hosts top exporters Texas

POSTSCRIPT, B3-2

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HYUNDAI EXTENDS HELPING HAND

Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc., sole distributor of Hyundai cars in the Philippines, and its dealerships, through the HARI Foundation, pledged their support to the rehabilitation and reconstruction activities of the Quezon Province in the landslide victims of Southern Leyte.

Through the Quezon Bahagi Ko recently launched project, Kalinga Leyte, the HARI Foundation, in partnership with the National Council for Disaster Coordination (NDCC), together with other corporate sponsors, will help rehabilitate the northern part of Leyte, particularly by constructing school buildings and classroom. Already, projects are underway to start construction of the first school building this April.

It will be recalled that one of the tragic consequences of the Leyte landslide was the engulfment of an entire elementary school where about 200 pupils, parents and teachers were caught in the aftermath.

According to Mr. Richard Lee, HARI Foundation Chairman, "We truly admire the gallant efforts of the Quezon Bahagi in bringing us all together to be active participants in nation building. We fully support their goals to transform the disaster caused by the tragedy into hope."

"I will have a lot of pictures to remind Christopher that we believe that through our corporate efforts with the DA and all our corporate partners, we can help make the village a safer place," added Ms. Marina Te Porter-Aquila, HARI Foundation President.

In related developments, Hyundai Motor Company donated the amount of P5 Million to the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) as official expression last January at the Malacañang Palace to support relief and rehabilitation efforts for the landslide victims of Southern Leyte.

The officials of Hyundai Motor Company led by Mr. B. Sung Tae, HMC General Manager and Chief of Asia Regional Headquarters, recently met with the Secretary President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to personally hand over the donation and relay their sympathies to the Visiting people.

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BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK

Postscript to 1017

From page B2-1

Instruments Philippines Inc. and the Philippine branches of Hong Kong's Goodwin Group, an elite law posts mainstay hiring firm.

Carlos Antonio Ichaso, a local real estate broker and board director of the Philippine Tourism Authority, said Baguio's distance from the capital had kept more businesses in the city limits.

But Proclamation 1017 dented the operations of the Cordillera's vegetable industry.

Jose Antipas Sr., president of the Benguet Farmers Federation Inc., said 500 and counting grocery role have lowered farmers' revenues because vegetable distributors have been using the chaos in Metro Manila's streets to press for lower prices.

"We've been gradually losing 1 percent of our daily profits because dealers try to negotiate prices down once there is news about chaos in Metro Manila," he said.

In Davao Norte, Manuel Mata, president of the Filipino Chamber of Commerce-Davao Norte, said it was business as usual for the province.

In Central Luzon

The almost 400 investors in the Clark Special Economic Zone, meanwhile, are more concerned about incentives.

"We'd rather focus on pending legislation to reinstate the incentives to us in Clark," said Frankie Villanueva, president of the Clark Investors and Locators Association (Cila).

Most investors in Clark are American, European, Japanese, Taiwan, Taiwanese and other Asian firms.

Julie Rosales, sales operations manager of Rosmarin Garments Philippines, Subic, said it has been business as usual for her shop.

"In the past, we were only about the tsunami that the New People's Army brings. Now, we won't also about Bush creating trouble in Metro Manila. We are affected because we are receiving of what will happen next," said Vicky Garcia, president of the Chamber of Commerce of Nueva Ecija.

Rodilla Bernhoos, who runs an agricultural supply store in the Nueva City of Muñoz in Nueva Ecija, said her customers have been coming in as usual to buy the seeds for their animals, fish, rice plants and other crops. Reports from Rolando Acosta-Fuertes, Cristino Arnaldo, Peter Jo Adhan, Errol Alcruz, Villamor Tuayo Jr. and Vincent Cabreza; PIA Northern Luzon Bureau, and Estella Ortaliz, Clarinda Ramos and Anselmo Roque; PIA Central Luzon Desk

Business unfazed in Bicol

By Edgar Aday
PIA Southern Luzon Bureau

LEGAZPI CITY—The issuance of Presidential Proclamation 1017 had no effect on business and industry in the Bicol region.

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) regional director Jocelyn Blanco said that based on interviews with local businessmen in the region, business operations remained normal.

There were no price increases, he is sure.

In Albay alone, based on the price monitoring activity conducted by the DTI-Albay, the prices of prime commodities in the province did not increase. As Agustin, price monitoring officer, said in a phone interview.

Interim Bicol regional director Rita Bernardo added that as far as tourism was concerned, everything was normal.

The regional office based in Legazpi, as in survey of hotels, restaurants and other tourism establishments in the region.

In an interview, Bernardo said she had received no cancellation of locally-booked big conventions, like the visiting National Statistics Conference on March 17.

In fact, she said, Air Philippines will resume its Manila-Legazpi afternoon flight on March 7, using an 138-seater plane.

Air Philippines will also resume its Iloilo-Legazpi-Cebu flight every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

Bernardo said the inaugural flights from Manila and Cebu will bring along leading travel agents and tour operators from all over the country.

The Philippine Airlines office in this city said its Iloilo flight from Manila to Legazpi and vice-versa has been fully booked since Monday with more than 100 passengers a flight.

Some firms hurting in the Visayas

By Nestor F Burgos Jr
PIA Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The declaration of a state of national emergency has some businesses here.

Valerio Montilla, president of the Iloilo Realtors Association and the Hotels Producers Association, said that with the lifting of the proclamation, investors would be assured that the government was really in control of the situation.

Business leaders in Iloilo and Bacolod had earlier warned of harder times ahead had the country remained under a state of national emergency because it promised a climate of uncertainty.

Secretary Ignacio Gaid, president of the Bacolod Foundation Inc. (BFI), meanwhile, said the effect of the PP 1017 on Boracay Island's tourism industry has been minimal.

"We have not received any cancellation from any of our members of scheduled conventions of reservations or bookings. We have received some queries regarding the situation but are answered them that it's business as usual on the island," Gaid said in a statement sent to the Inquirer.

No serious damage in Davao

By Geronima A Jacare
PIA Mindanao Bureau

DAVAO CITY—Presidential Proclamation 1017 has not seemingly any serious damage to business in Mindanao, industry leaders said.

"It was hardly felt at all among Davao businessmen," Bienvenido Cariaga, president of the Davao City Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCCI), said.

In Davao Norte, where violent demonstrations have disrupted business operations, the present calm in Davao City have always been peaceful, according to Cariaga.

He said he had been meeting with travel groups in Davao, and there was no cancellation of bookings despite the state of emergency.

This despite the issuance of travel advisories by Malaysia, Australia and Hong Kong, that warned citizens from there could be against travel to the Philippines.

Cariaga explained the export sector was not affected by the declaration.

"Transactions by our exporters and importers are hardly affected at all because our Customs office is operating as usual," he said.

Atty. Rogan Dans, Mindanao representative to the Bicol Development Council (BDC), said a state of calamity for the Bicol region's tourism may have occurred because 1017 was in effect for just a week.

But she said the greater damage was the negative impression that it made on investors and the international community.

"The perception of the instability of the country's political climate has a direct impact on the economy she said.

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

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Tel. Nos. 522-00-80; 551-22-00 connecting all departments

INVITATION FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
for the
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING (AML) PROJECT

The Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) is conducting a two-stage public bidding procedure for the procurement of an AML solution for the **AML System Project**.

The primary purpose of this turn-key project is the acquisition of a fully integrated, "commercial off-the-shelf" AML solution, which includes the following components:

- Software application licenses and other software components (OS/DB, APIs, connectors, middleware, etc.)
- Hardware components (database application, reports and all other required servers, disaster recovery servers, disk storage, etc.)
- Various technical tools

Furthermore, the AML solution provider shall also be responsible for the Extract Transform Load (ETL) process. This is the extraction of all required data from the different source systems, data transformation and data loading to the target database. This solution provider shall also be responsible for the following requisite activities: source to target mapping, data availability and quality assessment, design and development of the ETL routines and system integration testing of the ETL routines. The solution provider has the option to use the Bank's existing ETL tool — Informatica PowerCenter 7.1.2 SL to facilitate the ETL process.

To ensure the highest degree of fit of the AML solution to the Bank's requirements, and to effectively manage change, the project scope likewise covers all the requisite software customizations, as well as change management activities like change management planning and communication, the review of "As-Is" processes, business process simplification and improvement, the documentation and training on the "To Be" processes, organizational change assessment, and monitoring of the implementation of the required organizational and process changes.

The project must take into account all related implementation activities and process such as systems integration, project management, system development lifecycle, change management, technology transfer (training and documentation), and maintenance and support. Likewise, the solution provider is expected to conduct a post-implementation review, at least ninety (90) days, but not to exceed one hundred twenty (120) days, after the system has been implemented in Production, to assess the project performance and the effectiveness of the system.

As per section 5 (j) of IRR-A of RA 9184, the procurement for this Information and Communications Technology (ICT) project is considered as one lot goods.

Interested parties may secure the **Eligibility Requirements**, upon signing of the **Confidentiality Agreement** from **February 27 to March 10, 2006, during regular office hours (between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm)**, from:

THE SECRETARIAT
Information Technology – Bids and Awards Committee (IT-BAC)
LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES
18th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza
9014 del Pilar corner J. Quintos Streets, Malate, 1004 Manila, Philippines
Telephone: +63 2 405-7122
Fax Number: +63 2 526-8979
Contact Person: Alan V. Bernas
Head – Technology Management Group
IT-BAC Member
Email Address: ittac@mail.landbank.com

The **Letter of Intent**, the accomplished **Bidder Evaluation Forms (List of Projects and Project Team Information)** and the rest of the **Eligibility Requirements** must be submitted by **March 10, 2006, 12:00 pm**, to the aforementioned address. Only parties who pass the **Eligibility Check** shall be allowed to participate in the second stage of this two-stage bidding procedure.

Those eligible bidders whose technical tenders meet the minimum required performance standards shall be notified accordingly and may secure the **Bidding Documents (e.g. Request for Proposal, etc.) from March 27 to 29, 2006, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00)**. For all those qualified parties, the **Pre-Bid Conference shall be held on March 28, 2006 (Tuesday), 10:00 am**, at the aforementioned address.

The **Approved Budget for the Contract is Thirty Five Million Pesos (P35,000,000.00), inclusive of all taxes**, which shall be sourced from the funds of LBP.

LBP reserves the right to waive any formality in the requirements and in the evaluation process. LBP further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) JOSE CARMELO C. NOGALES
Executive Vice President
Chairman, IT-BAC

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
Roxas Boulevard Corner Pablo Ocampo Sr. Street
Manila 1004
LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES and DEVELOPMENT BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

AMENDMENT TO THE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT DATED OCTOBER 13, 2000 DEFINING THE GUIDELINES ON TRANSFERABILITY OF TAX CREDIT CERTIFICATES ISSUED UNDER EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 226, THE OMNIBUS INVESTMENT CODE

Pursuant to Section 5 of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) dated October 13, 2000 executed by and between the Board of Investments (BOI) and the Department of Finance (DOF) in accordance with the provisions of Article III of Executive Order No. 226, R.A.C. 226, implementing the transferability of tax credit certificates (TCCs) issued under the old E.O. No. 226, otherwise known as the Omnibus Investment Code of 1987,

1. Transfers by businesses belonging to a distressed industry sector

Transferees belonging to an industry sector which BOI has ascertained is not in distress shall be allowed to transfer their corresponding TCCs to any BOI-registered transferees without securing them to comply with the conditions imposed under Section 5.c. to and 5.f of the preceding MOA, provided that this type of transfer shall only be allowed within the first two (2) years from effectivity of the MOA. Transferees desire to re-transfer without prejudice to renewed BOI/DOF prior approval by the Executive Committee.

2. Section 5 of the MOA is hereby amended to include the following paragraph:

Henceforth, in order to simplify the administrative process in ascertaining the existing sector and since BOI and DOF only deal with Investment Incentives of the Central Government, the ascertaining BOI/DOF including exceptions to the guidelines for numerous consideration shall now be done through a resolution duly approved by the Board's Executive Committee, which resolution shall be the implementation effect the same for transfer MOA between BOI and DOF, subject to compliance with the provisions of EO 226 and with the required administrative procedures under the Administrative Code.

BOARD OF INVESTMENTS	DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
(Sgd.) ELMER C. HERNANDEZ	(Sgd.) MARGARITA B. MENDOZA, JR.
Executive Director	Undersecretary

Signed in the presence of:

(Sgd.) ROMEO S. LEANO	(Sgd.) ERNESTO G. ARADAN
Executive Director	Executive Director
Board of Investments	DOF-CASHIER

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
CITY OF MANILA

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 15th day of February 2006, in the City of Manila, affiants exhibited to me their Community Tax Certificates as follows:

NAMES	C.T.C. Number	ISSUED AT	ISSUED ON
Elmer C. Hernandez	13249911	Mandaluyong, Rizal	3-Jan-06
Margarita B. Mendoza, Jr.	05778999	Makati City	21-Jan-06

AS WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my notarial seal on the day, year, and place above written.

Doc. No. 234
Page No. 48
Book No. V
Series of 2006

(Sgd.) ATTY. GERMAGO G. ORTIZ JR.
Notary Public
PTR # 7788E / 1-3-06
IBP # 0001 01 2006
Tin # 123-45-678

National roadmap for 2030

OUR GREATEST FEAR THAT ARMY OF DR. Difference has afflicted the Filipino nation is allayed by our presence here today.

Our response to the call of the business for Solidarity in Asia to participate in crafting a National Roadmap for the Philippines is a firm affirmation of our faith in the future of this country and a confirmation of our belief that the obstacles and difficulties of the present time, though disconcerting, will come to pass.

Our fate as a country is in our hands and a brave old future will await us if we act together as one people, forgetting our narrow, selfish interests, and letting love of country prevail in our thoughts, in our hearts and in our deeds. Today we accept the responsibility for affirmative action. We concur with the IBS that there is the most important task of planning the future direction for the country and shaping it to become the country we want to bequeath to our next generation of Filipinos, even if sometimes we get trapped in the myopic view of the issues and problems of the day.

The Management Association of the Philippines, a pioneer and strong advocate of long-term planning, is honored to be the lead organization in harnessing the resources of the business community and defining its role, in partnership with all other sectors, in creating the national roadmap. MAP whose membership are the CEOs of companies and businesses that generate much of the country's wealth and whose sphere of influence extends to civic or business associations, is certainly willing to lead private enterprise in participating in purposeful, selfless, positive and well-coordinated efforts to build a strong nation.

The role of business in the development of a nation is so clearly articulated in a joint statement of the CEO task force on global corporate citizenship, World Economic Forum which says: "The greatest contribution business, businessmen, can make to development is to do business in a manner that obeys the law, produces safe and cost effective products and services, create jobs and wealth, support training and technology cooperation and ensure internationally standards and values in areas such as the environment, ethics, labor and human rights. In make every effort to ensure the positive multipliers of our activities and to minimize any negative impact on people and the environment, everywhere we invest and operate. A key element of this is recognizing that the frameworks we adopt for being a responsible business must move beyond philanthropy and be integrated into core business strategy and practice." Simply stated, the overriding objective of business is to reach a level of productivity that will allow our own businesses to competitively sell our products and services to a free and open market. Only when our economy succeeds in attaining global competitiveness can business truly achieve its ultimate purpose – that of becoming the key driver to growth so that it can spread, share and sustain the benefits of development by delivering prosperity to as many people as possible.

How then can we produce goods and services that can meet the standards of quality and performance acceptable to the international market? We begin by identifying the obstacles that preclude businessmen from squarely facing competition in the marketplace. These problems are no secret to us. The solutions are staring us in the face yet we have not demonstrated the political will nor the patriotism we need to break these barriers down. Let us highlight some of the imperatives that the business sector roadmap must critically examine:

1. Good governance and effectiveness to sound ethical standards by both the private and the public sectors. Corruption, bribery and weak governance create direct and indirect costs and risks which contribute to uncompetitive prices for our goods and services.

2. Our physical infrastructure which are also made inefficient by corruption and poor planning hampering the easy and reasonable access of market.

3. Our educational system that fail to produce the skills, talents and work attitudes that will supply the needs of industry in the quality demanded by international standards.

4. The optimum use of information and technology to develop our effective personnel, that will upgrade quality, reduce costs, broaden market knowledge and sharpen decision making.

5. The justice system that is perceived to be fair, efficient and accessible and operates under a stable and predictable regulatory framework.

6. Political and economic stability which can only occur when the economic and social needs of the poor in society are addressed.

7. Financial information that is fair, transparent and fully compliant with international standards of reporting.

8. Accountability and availability of capital and credit at terms appropriate to the nature of the enterprise.

9. Corporate citizenship, which includes corporate social responsibility investors mainstreamed as part of the core business of companies.

The statement for achieving the goals of business in the service of the common good, brings to focus the necessity of collaboration with other sectors, under the national umbrella such as the IBA. If the national roadmaps are to succeed, all sectors must work in demand synergy and effective governance of public institutions which is the end should take the lead in harnessing the competencies and contribution of all sectors, including the resources, productivity and innovation of the private sector. The challenges we face are complex and interdependent and the above all sectors have their share to do in no group has a monopoly of all the solutions. IBA is doing the right thing by promoting, through the national roadmap, the common relevance for all the sectors to use as they confront the more extensive and specific challenges of what they can do for the common good.

In full support of IBA's effort we in MAP in cooperation with other groups in the business community are prepared to present the business initiatives in August of this year. Let us join the cavil of hope today as we may harvest its true outcome.

(Speech delivered at the conference on "Framing of Goals of Mapa." The author is president of the Management Association of the Philippines and chairman emeritus of the Asian Institute of Management.)

MAPping THE FUTURE

Evelyn R. Singson

Replacing . . .

From page B2.1

When you're doing well, instead of patting yourself on the back, go shopping. Look around for somebody that's bigger, better, faster, and smarter than you are. Study their techniques and benchmark your success against theirs. I did this as a young leader, because very quickly in my field, I had successes. Instead of being content as the number one leader in my organization, I started going to other organizations where I wouldn't be in the top 100.

I was no smarter in learning, but I immediately realized the way to serious marry is compare myself against everyone I was learning, but to compare myself with somebody better than I was.

2. Fill up inspirational dissatisfaction.

Inspirational dissatisfaction does not mean you are never pleased or satisfied. Nor is it a license to beat yourself up or come down hard on your people. Instead, it's a creative awareness that you can do better.

Focus on more to improve personally and to become exhausted only in the pursuit of your vision. This state of mind unlocks your creative zone and prompts you to keep on stretching.

3. Develop a daily dose of paranoia.

There's a difference between a daily dose and an overdose of paranoia. An overdose makes you feel overdone around you most able. A daily dose is an exact nothing—a pebble in the shoe—that reserves you enough discomfort to keep you continually alert and engaged. In fact, the best leaders act as though someone is out to get them, like they're on the verge of losing every customer every day.

4. Continue to set goals that stretch your team.

If you can reach your goals with a "business as usual" approach, then your goals are too small. A goal is only effective when it forces changes, high-horizons, and bold moves.

The thinking of a leader is contagious in the team. As a leader, you broadcast your way of thinking to your people, and they are going to pick up on your signals immediately.

Successful leaders have their thinking on survival—"If I can just make it through the year" average leaders focus their thinking on maintenance—"If I can just hold on to what I have." Successful leaders focus their thinking on continual progress.

If you're a manager who concentrates more on holding your own than on moving forward, you're easy to see the obvious. Don't settle for what conditions force upon you.

Sir Marcus Buckingham says, "The only thing that leaders have in common is leaders break strike rules."

Great leaders don't just buy into what everybody else is saying, and they don't follow the herein pull. Great leaders are continually creating their own conditions for success by blazing new trails.

(For information on John Maxwell's *In Focus* or public leadership or teamwork workshops, please e-mail us at mamwell@mapi.ph or call 633-2732-00 and ask for Gina. Dot MAXWELL ON to 4632 (Smart) to get daily 3BE leadership insights from John Maxwell. God bless!)

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BUSINESS Monday

Complete address rule

MOST BUSINESS ORGANIZATIONS tend to list vaguely with words where they want to their corporate documents their principal place of business or the address of their officials and stockholders.

The information about the location of the corporate office or residence of the incorporators is usually limited to the name of the street and the city or municipality where it is situated.

There are instances when the address indicated is an unknown building or condominium, the name of a street, then ends with "Metro Manila." The name of the city or municipality is omitted.

The refusal or hesitance to give exact details about the address probably stems from security concerns or the desire of the affected parties to maintain their privacy.

The problem with vague addresses is, it is difficult to locate them when notices or summons have to be served on corporations or partnerships, or their officers and stockholders.

Since either government offices rely on the Securities and Exchange Commission for data about private business organizations they deal with, the need for accurate information assumes greater importance.

Disclosure

To meet the "full disclosure" requirement of existing laws, the SEC has, effective last week, laid down new rules on the submission of information about addresses.

Corporate Securities Info *Raul Palabrica*

SEC Circular No. 3, series of 2006, states that all corporations and partnerships applying for registration should state in their articles of incorporation or partnership the following information:

- The specific address of their principal office which shall include, if locatable, the street number, street name, barangay, city or municipality.
- The specific residence address of each incorporator, stockholder, director, trustee or partner.

The old practice of simply indicating "Metro Manila" as the principal place of business will no longer be allowed.

This is not to denigrate the status of Metro Manila, but stating it as the place where a business entity can receive mail is simply impractical.

Specific address

For corporations or partnerships already registered with the SEC, there is no need for them to amend their articles of incorporation or partnership to effect the information requirement.

Whatever data they earlier submitted to the SEC to support their registration are considered duly accepted (or established facts) which are no longer open to amendment or changes.

They will remain in the official records as the basis for the issuance of their certificate of registration.

But this does not mean these business organizations are excused from making available to the public, if needed, relevant information about the addresses of the people who manage their affairs.

The circular also requires all corporations to state in the general information sheets (GIS) that they are obliged to submit annually the specific residence address of each stockholder, officer, director or trustee.

So, if for any reason or another the persons mentioned have to be held responsible—personally or in their corporate capacity—for questionable actions of the corporation, the authorities will know where to look for them if the company has closed shop.

Thanks to our gossipy society, there is always a relative, friend or bystander in the community who can give information about the forwarding address or whereabouts of somebody they know who has changed residences.

Consequences

Since the SEC circular does not provide for any exception, the disclosure requirement on addresses applies equally to lawyers who act as "dummies" for client corporations.

The ID card buck about it. Their residence, not office address, has to be spelled out clearly in the GIS.

As in other regulatory procedures, it is expected that some parties would attempt to evade compliance or stretch the interpretation of the rules to suit their interests.

For new applicants for registration of corporations or partnership, the failure to state the required address will result to the outright rejection of the application.

An undertaking to amend the documents after the certificate of registration has been issued will not be allowed.

In the case of the GIS, the use of an incomplete address will invalidate the document for purposes of compliance with the reportorial requirements.

And if a corrected version of the GIS is not filed within the prescribed period, the corresponding penalty, depending on the implied earnings for most corporations and fixed values for non-stock corporations, will be imposed.

(For feedback, please write to rpalabrica@inquirer.com.ph)

Replacing complacency

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

ONE OF THE biggest temptations that leaders of successful organizations face is thinking big.

After a taste of success, even the best and brightest leaders suddenly start to think complacently. When a company gets on a roll, some leaders lighten up and start playing it safe. They stop playing to win and begin playing not to lose. When they once thought big and new, now they think incrementally.

The temptation is a reality with a lot of sports teams. How many times have we seen teams lose their momentum and then lose the game because instead of playing to win, they began to play not to lose?

They get ahead, but then they pull back and stop playing with the intensity that earned them the lead.

The same temptations may company executives. With the organization exceeding expectations and all looking sound positive, the leadership gets excited.

The organization appears to be cruising toward its best year ever, when all of a sudden, the focus shifts from gaining momentum to sustaining momentum. The moment leadership changes focus, momentum vanishes.

I like to think of momentum as the gasoline engine. When you have it, people think you're better than you are. You're on a roll and everybody is amazed by your success.

When you lose momentum, people think you're worse than you are. Momentum magnifies your performance, and positive momentum has a natural knack to push you forward.

When things are on a roll, don't sit on the ball—run up the score! In other words, when you've got momentum going for you, put the pedal to the metal. Take off. Ignite momentum. As I wrote in "Thinking for a Change," "We are today where our thoughts brought us, and we will be tomorrow where our thoughts take us."

When we stop thinking big as leaders and dwell upon preserving past successes, we start to think conservatively. The big thoughts that gave us a big year are replaced by conservative thoughts, which will give us a mediocre year.

I am sure glad your thoughts aren't that way! Keep your momentum moving in the right direction.

1. When you're doing well, go shopping.

LIFESTYLE

Victorio Edades, father of Philippine modern art

His former student, now a senior artist, remembers the National Artist, whose 21st death anniversary the nation marks today

By James Ongpauco
Contributor

FROM 1934 TO 1938, MY biggest artistic influences were Victorio C. Edades and Gabriel Custodio, whom I had had the great opportunity to meet while taking up Fine Arts in Manila at the time.

Professor Edades was born in Dagupan City, Pangasinan on Dec. 23, 1893. Coming from a poor farmer's family and the youngest of 14 children, he had shown an early interest in drawing.

In 1915, he was enrolled at Pangasinan High School in Lingayen. After graduating, he got a scholarship from the University of Washington. Edades and five schoolmates took a passenger ship to San Francisco in April 1919. They reached San Francisco after two months by ship and then took the train to Washington.

There, Edades studied Architecture. He kept dreaming every day, until his dear aunt. A doctor advised him to slow down, and he returned to the Philippines for a vacation. When he went back to the US to resume his studies, he decided to drift to Fine Arts.

At the time, he was already tremendously interested in the works of Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) and Diego Velázquez (1599-1660). He also saw the works of Paul Cezanne (1839-1906), Henri Matisse (1869-1954) and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) in a group exhibit in 1923. It was at the time that Edades' painting style changed from realism to neo-impressionism.

Edades earned his bachelor's degree from University of Washington in 1923, and proceeded to get his master's, staying there for nine years. His master's thesis was the 68" x 125.5" work titled "The Builders" (being cited as Edades' masterpiece), is in now with the collection of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

While studying the theory and technique of painting from European perspectives, Edades realized there was a growing economy like the Philippines. It had no culture it could call its own yet. Edades even noted that

Victorio Edades . . .

Previous page A1

when he was studying Architecture, he was learning the French principle of design.

During the course of his study, he met Jean Garrot, who later posed for his paintings. They fell in love and got married after he earned his master's in 1928. They returned to the Philippines shortly.

Edades loved his country so much and wanted to contribute how what he learned in America. But during that period, there were no galleries and no organized art associations in Manila. He found little encouragement to spur public interest in the arts. Painting was considered a pastime, not a full-time profession.

Defiant

Edades defied such conditions in 1930 when he exhibited his artworks at the Philippine Columbian Club in Intramuros, Manila, defending his right to self-expression. His rivals at the time were less impressionistic, like Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) and Cezanne, his masterpiece, "The Builders," was characterized by strong composition and dark colors.

Edades introduced modern art to the Philippines when it was still largely a conservative society. The public was not ready to appreciate artworks, said art critic of the paintings was cold.

He wrote his personal account of the beginnings of modern art in the article "The Last 10 Years of Filipino Art," published in Philippine Magazine in 1938. "The history of Filipino art during the last 10 years is simply the history of Modern Art in the Philippines," he wrote.

"...When I was a senior student in the University of Washington Fine Arts Department in 1920, I was admitted into the Seattle Fine Arts Society through the recommendation of my professors—Walter P. Isaacs, 'The Lady with a Fan,' which was then hanging proud in the Pacific Northwest Art Competition conducted by the Society, in which my painting titled 'The Sketch' won the First honorable Mention; the only awarded given to Filipino Artists, which was won by one of my professors."

He wrote that when he exhibited "The Sketch" at the Philippine Columbian Club, there was an uproar. Classically trained and academic-based artists condemned the work and others like it. It was the onset of the clash between the classicists and the modernists.

Edades ended his article: "It [the exhibit] ushered in the opening salvo for the battle between the Conservatives and the Modernist which has continued ever since and which will continue till the Modernists win in the end."

At Santo Tomas

Heritage hunters he had met the Dominicans in Bangalore (the province was the Dominicans' summer pool), Edades continued the anachronic battle largely from the Dominican-run University of Santo Tomas, where School of Fine Arts he helped establish in 1950.

Edades taught at UST for three decades, and was joined by the likes of Carlos "Botong" Francisco, Cesar B. Ocampo, Diosdado Lorenzo, Antonio Garcia Llamas, Victorio Manansala and J. Elizalde Navarro.

It was at the time when the UST School of Fine Arts became the cream of modern art.

In 1954, architect Juan Nakpil tasked Edades to paint a mural for the lobby of Capitol Theater on Escolta, Manila. Edades sought the help of then 22-year-old "Botong" Francisco, who, in turn, invited mainstay and fellow UP School of Fine Arts classmate Lolo Ocampo.

They all worked on the composition, while Edades presided the initial sketches. Titled "The Rising Philippines," it was among the first significant murals in the country.

Modern art began to flourish but modern artists still were ranking as their own. They needed to work as a group to make modern art significant.

Because he was the foremost modernist advocate, Edades led the so-called "Thirteen Modernists," the group he founded. Edades, Francisco, Lorenzo, Manansala, Cirilo B. Ocampo, R.R. Ocampo, Anita Magsaysay-Ho, Arturo Luz, Demetrio Diego, Reuyo Hizon-Gonzalez, Josef D. Borlaza, Estrellita Obligado and Araceli Limcaco.

Through World War II might have shattered collective attempts to promote modern art more aggressively, the Thirteen Modernists eventually chose individually to some of my classmates and me to his home on Pilar Street near Dewey Boulevard, Mandaluyong City, for a painting session. I learned so much from his life-burning class.

In March 1955, I was inspired to join the life-painting competition in UST, where I won the honorable mention.

In the same year, in the Shell National Art Competition, my oil painting "Vista por la Noche" won a special prize. The painting was featured in the company's 1956 calendar, and was included in their art collection.

That competition had two separate categories for modern and conservative art. Excluding the special prize, there were three different winners for each category.

On that, I note that year, the works were exhibited at the Northern Motors showroom, and Pilot Lady Luz Magsaysay sponsored the awarding ceremony. Of the seven winners, five were students of Edades at UST. He himself guided the investigative pilgrings of the works of the Shell contest on the Indochina boards.

As an educator, professor Edades did not try to intimidate his students, nor was he very active with me. He was committed to his job, and we vastly enjoyed his creativity. He encouraged his students to develop their own styles, and didn't force them to adopt his style.

I remember him telling us, "If you are studying painting, you must be patient, so that you can develop your artistic talent. You must also be sincere with your work to become successful one day."

Edades' skills as an educator proved to be one of his biggest strengths. He encouraged us to gain a broader sense of humanity. "Your love art was developed and of art, he insisted, must be paid of "all that we touch, see and hear in everyday life."

Edades emphasized that each painting style usually depended on the painter's background. "To see

"MODERN Maria Clara," by Edades

[ABOVE] Dagohoy's (right), first one-man exhibit at China Art Gallery, Ayala Shopping Lane, Manila Hotel, Escolta to Ortiz, Manila, on March 11, 1939. Guests of honor were Ambassador and Madame C.H. Chan and Professor Edades (third from left)

"THE RISING Philippines" mural at Capitol Theater, Escolta, Manila, with Carlos Francisco, Ernesto Fabie, Lolo Ocampo and Edades

Powerful pedagogue

Edades, whose educational background took him out of the more progressive areas of his time, stressed free expression more than anything else, and "not to be afraid of making mistakes."

He once mentioned why I wasn't a regular student, and persuaded me to finish my bachelor's degree in Fine Arts. I replied: "I am studying Fine Arts and painting, but my foremost goal is to become a painter one day. If that dream doesn't come true, it's no use having a degree."

Edades understood my position and was very supportive.

Apart that conversation, I assured that Edades was spending more time in his life painting class, teaching me all I needed to know. And he saw that I was doing fabric.

Whenever he found a good-looking model, he would invite

(I mail the author at gdeveraux@yahoo.com

Cusi leads WorldBex artists

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

THE NAME DANIEL CUSI CRAWLS OUT among the country's best bets for international marathons. He has exhibited in various cities in Europe and Asia, and has 8 isolated bookings for solo shows in various galleries in Berlin, Chelsea, Brussels and Luxembourg.

He is also featured in the art exhibit at the "11th WorldBex to be held at the World Trade Center March 7-11, "An Home Ground: Investment Homes of the Global Village by 21 Contemporary Filipino Artists."

Scheduled in March, he will be featured as principal artist in the coffeetable book "A Feel of the Senses," a commemorative publication of Bagsic University to mark its founding.

Record

The 39-year-old Cusi, who hails from Bangalore, Mindoro Oriental, remains firmly rooted on home ground despite the phenomenal streak of good fortune coming his way. He continues to paint every day, maintains a quiet life while in his loft there, reads, observes, listens, and never allows fame and honour to take the better of him.

In fact, last December, for the local Art Bureau of Bagsic University commissioned him, he practically lived in the modest hotel in Bangalore for him to do the work on the large piece, only on discussions and interruptions in his work schedule.

What is more amazing in Cusi's work ethics as painter is that he prefers to stay unknown, aloof and discreet for himself what is worth painting in his memory.

In Bagsic, which he knows intimately having been born there in the 1970s through the '80s, he chose the later than offered much potential for his sketching needs.

"KALABO ni Banoy," by Hilo Bakajan

"BAGUIO Cathedral," by Rafael Cusi

Not the type who would truly emphotographs, he senses the moment that holds a particular place-significance, love the surrounding foliage, the intriguing weather in the city that he calls his, and still think of her and cold, inflating his personal, indeed, magical, touch, by way of his vibrant brushwork, the spontaneous meeting of color and texture, and movement in his purposeful, stylistic and unpredictable yet consummate style.

Stunning

Cusi's drawings with a variety of media—watercolor, acrylics, oil pastel, and various drawing instruments such as charcoal, ink and pencil—feel never been more explored than in the stunning book pieces.

Indeed, with that was always so unpredictable mood, and the weather ever more so, he had to let go of his brush in one sweep, a habit he acquired from years of traveling to distant places.

He admits his unbreakable darkness unfailingly set in the open, rather than in the enclosed boundaries of the studio. He likes the great out-

"SAMIA," by Doctrine of Faith

The artist may be making the leap from WorldBex to one of the world's best

doors to observe and listen to nature's sounds as he struggles to his art.

The artist, equally concerned for his underwater art, also chooses a number of fresh new works for the 11th WorldBex show, which this writer is privileged to curate.

Together with 10 leading and emerging artists, from Nona Alvarado and Fil Delacruz to Karel Bolivar and Edwin Wijnsberge, as well as a number of new names, Cusi has gone back to his one true love—the seascape of his youth with sunday ceramics which perpetually hug out of his canvases. [This is the subject of the book, "Underwater Series," which is the artist's pitch for the one-woman.]

The water theme in his art is an obsession. The new works are a substantial in the full-figure rag of his gifts, and the fulfillment of an artistic circle to always look back and take a giant leap.

Cusi is slated to exhibit his works at The Gallery at Chelsea Library in the Royal Borough of Kensington-upon in Chelsea, through the courtesy of Ambassador Edgardo Espiritu, May 29-June 3. He will proceed to The Gallery at Albion Building in Berlin, Germany, for the Philippine Independence Day celebrations.

Now step will be Luxembourg through the Philippine-Luxembourg Society and its president Jean Croze. His final destinations are Brussels, Belgium, sponsored by the Knights of Rizal in Antwerp, Belgium chapter, and The Hague in Netherlands.

Other Filipino artists at the 11th WorldBex [Philippine World Building and Construction Exposition], March 7-11, at the World Trade Center are Isidro Ballesteros, Raul Bautista, Florence Cinco, Maria Corazon Edades, Al Perez Gonzalez, Cirilo Gonzalez, Jr., Ruben Millan, Julius Rodriguez, Jaime Silp, Anita Wanda, Jose Valeriano. Call 8155374 and 8156260.

VISUAL ARTS

Exposures at InterCon

"CHASING LIGHT AND CATCHING SHADOWS," an exhibit of landscape photographs by Carlos Esguerra, opens on March 7, 8:00 a.m. at the Lobby of InterContinental Manila. Part of the proceeds will go to community projects of the InterCon. Call 8159111 loc. 2121 and 2122.

Mindanao artists at Linys

LINYS Gallery is holding its annual group exhibit until March 31 at Linys Gallery, 604 G. Puyat Ave., Makati. A Brothers Wee, "Dialogo, Again Only). The exhibit features artworks by Romulo Tacsuali of Cantilan, Surigao City; Ernel Salinas and Jude Dumanta of Cagayan de Oro City; Omar de la Cruz, Joan Maximilian, Lucil Nebrida and Hugh Cabot of Iligan City; and Jun Eduardo and Joseph Kim of Davao City. Call 0905.3573012.

Doctalero show

ARTIST-Folk Independent Art Space (suite 2H-K 139 Business Plaza, Reservoir Sancan St., Bel-Air, Makati) presents "Look Mazan: Utility of Colors," an exhibit by F.R. Doctalero, until March 30. Call 8950857.

Asian artists at Ayala

AYALA Museum presents an exhibit of contemporary art by members of the Federation of Asian Women Artists. The exhibit, titled "Fabulous" focuses on the theme "Being Asian, Being Arts." This ongoing exhibit, which runs until March 26, features 121 mixed media, paintings and sculptures. Call 8157151 loc 21.

Painting contest

"1,000 AND Strong," seven-the-land painting competition for high school students, is on on March 11 at Ayala Museum. Entry forms are available at the museum's Tammy Office or at Ayala Museum. Call 7507111 or 7552000. Deadline is March 8.

Canonean exhibit

CANONEAN artist Ryan Cayanan is hosting a one-man show entitled "Contemporary Spiritual Perceptions," until March 23 at Wabi. 124 G. Araneta Ave., Quezon City. QC. Call 8370148 or 4154448.

"2051 Another Day," by Lina Llagono Clavi

Clavi at Duemila

CLAVI LLAGONO Duemila will present "Reinforced Forty Eight," at Duemila at 114 E. Rodriguez Ave., Bel-Air, Makati City. Call 8164660 or 8153816.

A WORK by Magpantay

Magpantay at Philamlife

CHONA MAGPANTAY joins Mike Magpantay presents "Palette" until March 15, at the Philamlife Gallery, Life Annex Manila. The exhibit features oil paintings of Filipino women. Call 5580481 or 5816000 extension.

Design and nation-building

WHEN THE DESIGN CENTER PHILIPPINES was founded in 1972, among its primary mandates were to improve the global position of the export industry through good design.

Those were the handicraft days when products were mostly handmade from natural materials that have now become either extinct or seriously endangered.

Handicraft production during those days was an endless variation on the same basic design. Everything looked the same. Each season, there was hardly anything new to excite the global market into placing orders.

The Design Center Philippines set out to redesign the Philippine image in the global export market. To achieve the task, an entire design structure had to be created, including the environment necessary to sustain it.

The new design structure was the mechanism for steering Philippine exports away from the low-priced "cheap and plentiful" handicraft products toward up-market products which sold at higher prices. Good design combined with the vast advantage from efficient production-line manufacturing was what would give added value to the "new" products.

Creating a design structure required establishing a new profession in the country of professionally trained designers aware of forms, shapes, but also of the ergonomic functions that relate shapes to human needs. They had to be aware of skills and the manufacturing process to efficiently and economically produce their designs.

The designs were to be sold on the global market. They had to be aware of market predilections, tastes and trends, and, printing in the consumer culture they aimed to sell their products also, they had to promote their designs in displays that caught the eye of jaded buyers roaming the vast exhibition halls all over the world during seasonal product exhibitions.

Most important, the designers had to be aware they were not creating one-of-a-kind works of art. That was for the artists.

The industrial designer's object must be functional, of high commercial appeal, and manufactured in series. It had to look global, not local.

Role of craft

Although the designer normally would not reproduce traditional Philippine craft or much less, make motorcar-type versions of it, he can infuse a precut role in product design.

PRIDE OF PLACE

Augusto P. Villalon

The handmade component still widely available in the Philippines is no longer available in the industrialized countries that compose the global export market. To set themselves apart, Philippine products were designed having hand craftsmanship with the efficiency of production-line manufacturing.

Bamboo and rattan are pressure-treated before being mechanically stripped, then bonded over to weaver craftsmen who employ traditional techniques to weave amazingly seamless, reconstructured baskets.

A variety of threads, cotton, flaxlid, linen, abaca, hemtex, are combined, hand-loomed into stunning textiles machine-sewn into upholstery table linens or housewares products.

Traditional dyes dyeing sometimes patterns the modern textile, and, for convenience, color-fast chemical dyes replace the old vegetable dyes.

Wood is dried in kilns, not into machines. Our rough cut is into components. These were later hand-carved or combined with hand-woven natural materials. The assembled furniture was then hand finished.

In design adaptation there is a continuum. Old inspires the new, hand and machine alternate in production.

Our handcrafted tradition gives Philippine export products identity, special warmth and tactile human quality. The finished product bears the imprint of, but does not copy Philippine traditional craft. Tradition is updated by adaptation.

The finished object should adhere to international look that many times is no longer identifiable as a first-rate global product that competes on an equal market footing with other products of the same type.

Product adaptation is a process that might combine global design with tradition. Many times tradition is the basis of product adaptation, the springboard for discovering shapes and forms, learning handcrafting techniques, incorporating natural materials, and converting at the amazing level of Philippine craftsmanship.

'Pillars of Asia'

Nine years ago, Design Center Philippines successfully produced a range of high quality products of sophisticated design which is global in appearance but decidedly Philippine in craftsmanship. These products have elevated the Philippines in export trade circles, so that the country is sometimes known as the "Milan of Asia," a salute to our creativity.

Three decades after Design Center launched the industrial design profession in the Philippines, its practitioners have become an important influence across the nation.

PHILIPPINE industrial designers update traditional local forms and materials into products of global quality.

CLAMPUSING versatility of fabrics handwoven from natural materials.

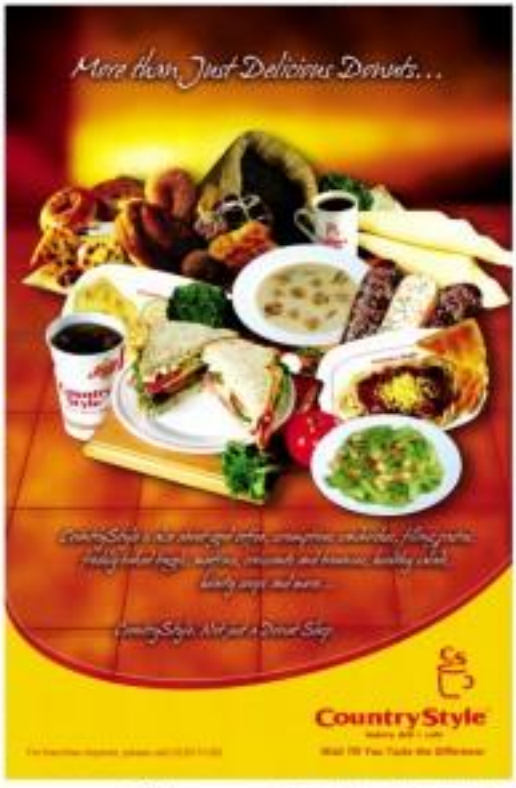
Over the years, Design Center Philippines matured, changed its name to Product Design and Design Center of the Philippines (PDDCP), and some collaborators with Cierra for market promotion for its designs.

The consistently high quality of Philippine design products seen in export showrooms and outdoor (although unrelated) in numerous products of local manufacturers are worthy of praise. Several industrial designers, proud that PDDCP achieved its original mandate of improving Philippine products through good design and enhancing its quality.

PDDCP has changed the image of Philippine exports, brought the industry to a higher plane, while improving the level of skill and employment in the hand-made sector.

It has proven that the creative culture is an a major influence in nation building.

Antiluak is welcome at ajballao@hotmail.com



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Longest-living Pinoy Benedictine marks milestone

By Aloysius A. Maranan, OSB
Contributor

REV FR. SILVESTRE H. LACSON, OSB, truly a man of prayer and work, celebrates his 80th birthday today. He is the only Filipino priest in history who has lived as a Benedictine for 57 years.

The psalmist says our average life span is 70 years, or 80 for those who are strong. But there are those who believe that we could make it even 90 or 100 if we have a good prayer life and a happy acceptance of aging and God's abounding love for us. Are these the "secrets" of Father Lacson to live a happy, healthy, humble and holy life.

On various occasions, he has lamented that he is very happy being a Benedictine priest and monk. If people ask him what his secret is, he is quick to say that there is no secret. He simply continues to live a happy, healthy, humble and holy life.

As a Benedictine priest, Father Lacson has been blessed by God with many people in love and service, meaningful ministries of works to do, and a lot of good things to hope for.

If ever joy and gladness beat in his heart, they are rooted in the fact that he has loved without condition. He has given without counting the cost, and he has received for the good of all.

Perhaps this is what Jesus meant when he talked about a hundredfold return to those who follow Him. His happiness today is a gift, and not a reward for anything he has humbly done.

Father Lacson was born on March 6, 1926, in Angeles, Pampanga. He is the third among seven children of Tomas Lacson and Josefina Henson. When he was baptized at Santo Rosario Church in Angeles, he was given the name Alfredo.

When he entered the Order of St. Benedict, he was given the name Silvestre. Benedictines adopt a religious name as a sign of conversion to monastic life.

In 1941, when Alfredo was 15, war broke out in the Philippines. Since seminaries had to close, his entry to the priesthood was postponed. He wondered if he ever would become a priest. He kept his faith and prayed hard to the Blessed Virgin Mary that he would be a priest.

On July 31, 1945, at age 19, he entered San Jose Seminary under the Jesuits on Sta. Ana Street, Manila. Because he was inclined to prayers in the setting of community life, he applied with the Benedictines.

On May 19, 1949, he took his monastic profession of obedience, stability and conversion of life at the Abbey of Our Lady of Montserrat on Mendiola, Manila. In his studied the Holy Rule of St. Benedict and the Scriptures and prayerfully lived the discipline of monastic life.

He was ordained to the priesthood by Father Cardinal Santos at the Abbey Church on March 10, 1954.

He finished his philosophy and theology courses with very high grades. He took further studies such as Literature in Theology and Master of Arts in English Literature at the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, in 1957.

Father Lacson has visited various Benedictine monasteries and established fraternal linkages with monks of other congregations worldwide.

FATHER Silvestre Lacson. The secret could be prayer, acceptance and love.

Educator

One of his challenging tasks was as prior-administrator of the Benedictine Abbey from 1972-1979. It was a tough and tough period of martial law. Where religious and lay leaders were suspected as subversives, Father Lacson and the Benedictine community together like a good shepherd.

In 1978, when no one was willing to take on the challenge, Father Lacson agreed to become the concurrent director of the then Benedictine Abbey School in Alabang Hills Village, Muntinlupa City.

It was no ordinary responsibility, but with the grace of God, he faithfully led his flock, cared for them and served them well.

In 1993, he became rector of San Beda College, Manila. From 1995, he has been rector sub-prefect of the local superior of the Benedictine community in Alabang.

The 57 years of Father Lacson as a Benedictine monk, more than as shepherd of Benedictine communities in Manila and Alabang, as founder of San Beda College in Manila and Alabang, has shown that Father Lacson is more is a humble and amiable man, a self-effacing and unassuming friend, a forgiving and loving father who has brought Jesus to the hearts of many people.

He is an exemplary monk whose love of God and people, discipline and prayer life are virtues that have influenced the lives of the younger generation of priests and lay alike.

Certainly, when he was born 80 years ago, the angels danced in heaven. Happy birthday to our dear Father Lacson!

The author is also a Benedictine priest who is finishing his Licentiate in Canon Law at the Pontifical Athenaeum of the Benedictines of the Universale of Santo Tomas, Espana, Manila.

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Mandy Navasero summer photo workshop

THE MANDY NAVASERO SUMMER Photoworkshop is on its 21st year.

The seven-Saturday workshop includes conversations for both the 35-mm SLR and digital cameras. Modules cover basic principles of light; exposure; how to develop your eye; lenses and glassware; photography as composition; and tips for aspiring photographers.

Lectures are held every Saturday, 2-5 p.m. Classes will start officially on April 8 and run until May 27. Students should have their own 35-mm cameras with interchangeable lens, preferably 300 mm, 28 mm or 28 mm, or digital cameras with similar zoom-lens attachments.

A Summer Photo Safari is set for April 13-15 jointly with Wally Winkler of Puerto Rivas.

Registration is ongoing in Mandy Navasero Photographic Studio, Rm. 327, UE Business Plaza, 259 Nicanor Garcia St. (formerly Bautista St.), Bel-Air II Village, Makati City. Call 895-1767 or 895-1006 or e-mail mandynavasero@yahoo.com.ph

Navasero obtained her BA in Photography, major in Illustration and Advertising, at Brooks Institute of Photographic Arts and Sciences in Santa Barbara, California.

PARTICIPANTS of the Mandy Navasero Corner Photo Safari last summer

Perfect wedding of the figurative and the abstract

By Constantino C. Tejero

IN EDGAR ROXAS' QUASI-abstract world, unidentified objects float in space. We'd probably never know why they're there except for their curious effect as an heavens element.

They're either a perfect orb, which could be a balloon, a ball, the sun, the moon, a planet...as in "Rhapsody" and "Landscape"—or a rectangular figure, which could be a log or a house, as in "Levitation" and "Unified Elements." Or a combination of both, as in "Alternative Dimension." And they're set in visual spaces that could be a landscape, a seascape, or outer space.

Roxas' technique consists of layering of various textures and embellishing with gestural strokes. The rectangular shape is but a step of impasto painted with shadow underneath, while the orb is delicately composed with highlights.

Here is the perfect marriage of the representational and the nonrepresentational in art...because these free-floating forms are really figurative: they even have shadows, and the gestural field obviously is abstracted. The odd yet apt pairing results in what looks like surrealism that could also be fun.

This convergence of polarities springs naturally from Roxas' artistic evolution. As a youth in the 1970s he had interested himself in the clean figuration of Rental Avalano, and as a student in the University of the Philippines College of Fine Arts he had an encounter with geometric abstraction—both as Jose Joya, Alfredo Lim and Edgardo Leaño exponent of figuration-abstract blend), Nestor Vinluan, Constancio Bernardo (abstraction pioneer).

Roxas' signature floating element and textured abstraction are again showcased in shots that take their landscape as subject and theme—"Sunset," 15 large and 37 small pieces in acrylic on canvas, until March 18 in Gallery Arts, 2/F, UE Business Plaza, 259 Nicanor Garcia St. (formerly Bautista), Bel-Air II, Makati City.

Says the exhibition note: "This show is the result of the artist's impressions, aesthetic moods and meditations on the subject of his most recent European sojourn to the small central German city of Kassel. Known as a city in the environs of the arts documenta art event. Documenta, as it is otherwise quite university town surrounded by farmlands and a landscape famous for its greenery."

Roxas once does building a series of exhibits in Vienna and Rome, from October to November last year. The trips his visit to Kassel, which coincided with the 50th anniversary of Documenta, marked a shift in his view of medium art and "how contemporary Philippine art could significantly gain by meditating on and combining with Western art as interpreted anew."

"ALONE"

Thus, in this exhibit, we are treated with a seamless blending of Western nonobjective abstraction and Filipino painterly tradition, plus the general motifs of Chinese calligraphy and the minimalism of Zen.

Whereas the hyperrealist rendition of floating objects against total abstraction in such pieces as "Winter," "Cultural Differences," "Element of Endless Dreams," or the calligraphic strokes à la Cy Twombly in "Endless Sojourn."

The pieces are chiefly monochromatic, in black and white, reminding us that, when the artist visited, the green landscape of Kassel had vanished and winter was creeping in. This is celebrated in "Endless Sojourn," like a flurry of snow, and in "Winter in Kassel," like a pool of mud.

Roxas received the Jurors' Choice at the 1994 Philip Morris Philippine Art Awards, and won for non-representational painting at the 1997 Art Association of the Philippines competitions. A fine specimen of a painterly abstractionist.

LIFESTYLE

"WE'RE STILL HOT!" Clockwise from top left: Nina Fernandez, Pinky Marquez, Lyn Sherman and Shamaine Centenera

Older women reinvent themselves

By Amadis Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

THE FOUR WOMEN CHARacters are, as the euphemism goes, women of a certain age (*les femmes d'un certain age*), or in their "second adulthood."

They means they are in their 50s, in the post-menopausal stage, no longer opting chicks but not that old either, and ready to reinvent themselves, to go into new projects, and to have new experiences with their husbands, lovers or what have you.

Thus, the sex comedy-musical "Were Still Hot!" by JJ McGill, an all-Broadway play, with the melodies synthesized and arranged by Stanley Cua. The Philippine production was announced at a recent press conference at the Prince of Jaipur Restaurant in The Fort, Taguig City.

And since the topic was primarily sex that day, a resource person, Dr. Eileen Mamalo, an Ob-gy-sexologist and infertility specialist of the Philippine General Hospital, stole the thunder from the producers and the performers present.

"I don't want to be outspoken," she said. "I'm a Catholic, and a member of Couples for Christ." But she spoke forthrightly, and gamely answered questions about sex.

One singer asked if oral sex was bad for the throat. "No," Mamalo replied.

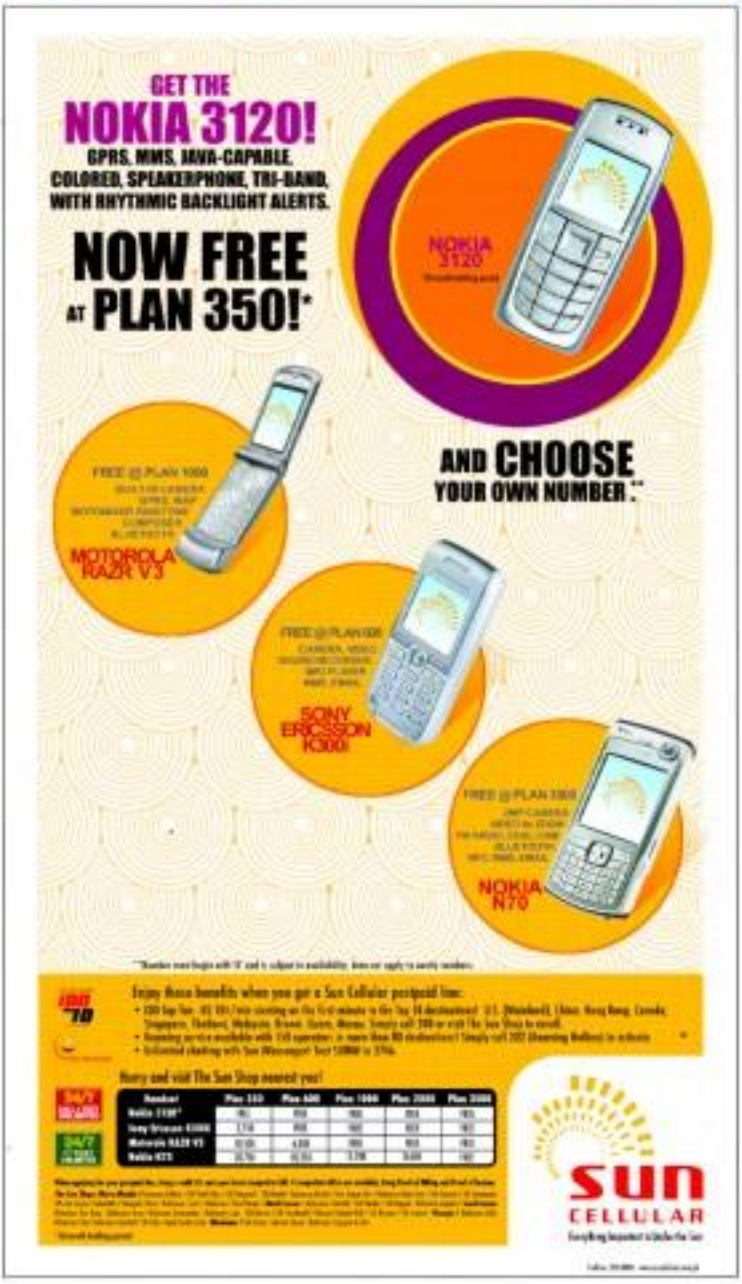
"My salesmen! Thank you for that!," the singer intoned. (I think she was... but I couldn't be sure because her back was turned to me.

"Romance is a better aphrodisiac," the physician observed. "Even one hour your husband is a better aphrodisiac than a sex video. (also) If you don't, after 8 [your sex], you'll lose it. The vagina will collapse."

In answer to a question on whether middle-aged men can keep up with women sexually,

GOOD 11

PINKY Marquez plays Cynthia Sawyer, the "typical housewife."



Pleasant but disposable

By Oliver Cardo

THERE ARE QUITE a few descriptives that come to mind upon watching "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change," Rep's latest offering after the dreary, snatched-over-titcoon play that was "Nobody's Perfect."

"Perfectly pleasant" is one of them. "Perfectly disposable" is another.

"Nobody's Perfect" and "I Love You, You're Perfect," represent Rep's recreation in its low-key, medium-day business model after the glorious peak of "Miss of La Mancha" last year.

Given the economics of the times and the paucity of truly compelling material every time, perhaps that's understandable. Rep can't afford one showy production after another, so it has to settle for season-filler hits and duds.

With her last three hits—"Tell me I didn't smile on an episode of the 'It Takes'" and "If, rather, how open-heart surgery done by an amateur on speed)," "Nobody's Perfect" is the best quite enough. The new production, one assumed, is an improvement on that season, but not by much.

Junk food

As unsophisticated by its nature is, "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change," directed by Michael Williams, is the theatrical equivalent of junk food—filling but forgettable.

The filling sensation comes largely from the customary theatrical predetermination that "I Love You's" cast of four brings to their roles. As various parts of lovers who go through the many complications of dating, engagement and eventual marriage, Bobbie Guevara, Liezl Barrozo, Nar Wardolet and Carlo Antonio tear into their parts with lip-smacking gusto.

That kind of verve has a subdued ring benefit: It gives this material more respectability than it has it.

"I Love You" finds Guevara, Barrozo, Antonio,

Jack Salud's pointillist vigor

"AJOYFUL Whisper"

WATFUL, THANKFUL, WARM, intimate, animated, nostalgic, subtle, simple, lyrical—these come to the fore as one steps back to savor Jack Salud's intricately executed works.

Every square inch of Salud's artwork contains 2,000 dots—five-grade) layers of pure colored minute dots moving from light to dark hues. This brings it to a total of 1,620,160 dots for every 4 ft x 2.5 ft canvas/artistic (currently the minimum size of his artworks). It is a test of one's stillness to mark a perfect dot. It is for one to consider the resilience of a #2 sable brush and the consistency of thinned acrylic paint.

Despite filling every millimeter of canvas space everyday for almost a decade now, Salud says, "Witnessing this avalanche of multicolored dots gradually transform itself into an image of serenity and joy never ceases to amaze me."

He developed the pointillist style naturally in the course of his artwork from a supposedly-artist with a fascination with the rough, granular texture of pottery.

In his 19th one-man exhibit titled "Tranquility in a Multitude of Stars," Salud interprets tranquility and silence of six large oval canvases. The collection features women in peaceful solitude while leisurely admiring the intrinsic beauty of nature flowers. It also features Salud's various interpretation of mother and child all rendered in "Pointillism."

Salud opened his first solo in 1997 at the Ayala Museum, which had given him the prestigious commission to design the museum's Christmas cards.

In 1999, he opened his first international solo exhibit in Roppongi, Tokyo, through the invitation of the Department of Foreign Affairs. Salud is a recipient of Gallery 139's second annual managed by Philip Rosas.

In 2005, Salud was commissioned by the Philippine Daily Inquirer to be one of the 20 Filipino artists to paint the life-size graphite sculptures for PDI's 20th anniversary.

He was also one of the 10 Filipino artists who contributed their interpretations of the Philippine Madonna, which were in the anti-tuberculosis stamp design contest of the Union Internationale Contre La Tuberculose St. Lee Mathilde Imaginacteur held in Paris, France.

"Tranquility in a Multitude of Stars" runs from March 10-25, at Gallery 139, 2/L, Ebanistia 4, Ayala Center. Call 7581734 or e-mail jsalud@global.net.

JACK Salud

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Selected participants shall be contacted prior to the event and shall be given instructions on how to forward payments. Once payment is received, the selected participants shall be given CONFIRMATION CODES. Only attendees parties with confirmation codes shall be accepted into the seminars.

Due to the limited slots, PC Magazine reserves the right to pre-select the participants for the above events.

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HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

THIS WEEK: Finally! You've overcome self-doubt. You've also used good wheeling-and-dealing skills to get the support you need. You work hard at what you do because you're motivated by your ideals. Practicality, you know, is important to you, but not everything revolves around it. Set your eternal sights to see what's new, what's unusual, what's different. Open your mind to the possibilities.

Birthdays of: Mongolian Olympic basketball player Lolo Mendol, male stripper Jon "Ty Dollar" Jones.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) You've got to be careful that you're not overdoing it. You're working hard, but you're also playing hard. You have a lot on your mind now; sometimes, you don't even realize it.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Your popularity is rising to dizzying heights. Now, everyone wants to see your fabulous self. Financial matters can wait, you know. There's nothing you don't want to do.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) You have a lot on your mind now; sometimes, you don't even realize it.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) You're in a good mood now, and you're ready to take on the world. Your self-confidence is at an all-time high. Don't let anything get you down.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Your self-confidence is at an all-time high. Don't let anything get you down.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Sometimes, you're not able to see the forest for the trees. Don't worry about it. Things will work out.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) You're full of confidence, self-assurance and strength. Use it well.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) You're full of confidence, self-assurance and strength. Use it well.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) You're full of confidence, self-assurance and strength. Use it well.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) You're full of confidence, self-assurance and strength. Use it well.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) You're full of confidence, self-assurance and strength. Use it well.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) You're full of confidence, self-assurance and strength. Use it well.

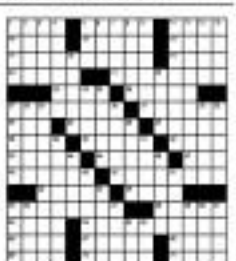
HUGOSHOTS — BY JOHNIE TEJOO

BEH — BY DANIEL SHELTON

KIKO MACHINE — BY MANG ABRERA

LOVEKNOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHONGLO

DAILY CROSSWORD



TULDOK — BY RAFU AND SETUH HILARIBILING